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EDITORIAL

END THE NIGHTMARE

Reagan-Bush politics, lately renamed the Bush-Quayle campaign, won a certain victory long before Election Day. By the cunning manipulation of symbols and shibboleths, the Republicans created a contest of conservatives against liberals, with the cards stacked entirely in favor of the former. Witlessly complicit in that dismal game was Michael Dukakis, who refused to honor and promote the extraordinary liberal tradition from which he sprang, and which offered him the only ideological base and political constituency for victory.

Jesse Jackson's remarkable candidacy imposed a progressive agenda and produced a populist consciousness that Dukakis himself exploited in the early primaries, and that carried the Democratic Party as a whole to new heights of popularity through the Atlanta convention. Dukakis's drop began when he turned his back on the expansive, embracing vision and moved to tailor his message to the mood of Reagan's America.

Reaganism has been a moral nightmare and a political disaster for all but a greedy few and their fawning friends, and Bushism, if it should come to pass, will be no better in kind. We expect that *Nation* readers will want to cast their votes this week against this national blight. Dukakis in the White House could provide the margin of hope and even survival for the victims of Republican neglect or hostility: the poor, minorities, Central Americans, people with AIDS, women seeking abortions.

But in the long run the Democratic Party cannot succeed in defeating Reaganism and its heirs with Dukakisism. The progressive/populist movement that developed this year must be strengthened, to remake the party and transform politics. That can happen at a thousand points of political action from now until 1992, and then we will have something worth voting for.

WHO IS LEDEEN?
Christopher Hitchens

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHINGS
Edward Sorel

WEAPONS PLANTS
Scott Ridley

THE DOLPHIN SLAUGHTER
Andrew Davis

ACTOR AS INCARNATION
Seymour Krim

STRIEBER'S SEQUEL
Thomas M. Disch

BUSH, DRUGS AND PAKISTAN

INSIDE THE KINGDOM OF HEROIN

LAWRENCE LIFSCHULTZ

Islamabad

"I will never bargain with drug dealers on U.S. or foreign soil," George Bush vowed in March. Impossible to read that pious statement now without the name Noriega springing to mind. But was the Panamanian the only narco-general with whom Bush was doing business? Within hours of his acceptance speech at the Republican Convention in New Orleans, Bush was paying solemn tribute to the United States' "special relationship" with Pakistan's Gen. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, killed the day before in an unexplained air crash. But even *The New York Times*'s somber report cum obituary alluded to an open secret: that "senior figures in the Zia government were said to have ties to drug traffickers."

It was May 1984 when Vice President George Bush swept into Pakistan. Upon his arrival he was greeted by a nineteen-gun salute and welcomed with unusual warmth by the generals, admirals and air marshals of the country's military regime. At the head of the delegation stood General Zia ul-Haq.

Bush's visit, the first to Pakistan by a senior U.S. official since Zia seized power in a July 1977 coup, was a sorely needed boost for a regime facing acute domestic unrest. It was also of crucial significance to the United States. The U.S. effort to support the Afghan resistance was ready to shift into high gear, and the Pakistan Army and its principal military intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence, were poised to support the largest U.S.

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LETTERS.

MCCONSTITUTION

La Jolla, Calif.

Jamie Kitman and Ruth Yodaiken illuminate the way the current bicentennial of the Constitution is being shaped by former Chief Justice Warren Burger's Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution and various right-wing groups ["Celebrating (Yawn) the Constitution," July 2/9]. But the authors miss some essential connections and thus don't seem to understand the important problem their article raises. That problem is the private, corporate production of public culture; in this case, of history and memory.

Kitman and Yodaiken lament the Burger commission's hold on about $46 million in appropriations for the bicentennial. Actually, that figure is less than one-fourth the amount (in 1986 dollars) Congress appropriated for the 1976 bicentennial of the American Revolution. (I'm citing Clyde Farnesworth, writing in *The New York Times* for November 17, 1986.) The real story here is not that Burger is withholding funds for worthwhile projects—and especially scholarship—which he undoubtedly is, but that under Carter and Reagan, funding of history has been shifted away from Federal agencies and assigned to the corporate sector. Control by right-wing think tanks over the content of celebrations and programs needs to be seen in this light: Phyllis Schlafly and her ilk may be calling the ideological shots, but who is footing the bill for what reaches the public? Simply, Merrill Lynch, Philip Morris and others find that patriotic commemoration suits their public relations goals, as long as commemoration stresses their own interpretations of past and present. The Burger commission's role has been to help orchestrate the connection between the Constitution "as a marketing tool" (Farnesworth), corporate funders and right-wing think tanks. This has been accomplished through the control, licensing and rental—that is, the privatization—of a symbol and set of ideas that are properly in the public domain. The Burger commission has generated funds and projects by giving its official imprimatur to various marketing-oriented commemorations, including those of A.T.&T., Bell Atlantic, Bell South, MCI, General Motors, Southland Corporation (7-Eleven stores), Hilton Hotels, General Mills, American Express, McDonald's and Polaroid, according to *The New York Times* and *Advertising Age*.

Kitman and Yodaiken correctly point out that the doctrine of original intent and the divine origins of the government fit the ideological agenda of the far right. They also fit the social agendas of enormous economic actors who would like to further depress the social wage, stall affirmative action and comparable worth, gut environmental controls and be less socially responsible in general (if that were possible). These ideas, whether found in free pamphlets or on TV, efface a history of conflict and argue that the past was perfect and the present is even better. This perfectly suits a corporate view of the world.

Ironically, one idea the founders never dreamed of is at the core of this bicentennial: the definition of the corporation as a person, as Robert Sherrill wrote in "Hogging the Constitution: Big Business's Bill of Rights," in the Winter 1987 *Grand Street*. Broadcasters and tobacco companies, for example, have made hay with the bicentennial, promoting their idea that free speech is the inalienable right of the corporate person. A television commercial paid for by broadcasters featured Uncle Sam saying, "I don't think you should ever forget that the freedom of this station to broadcast is made possible because of the Constitution of the United States." Well, it wasn't: It has been made possible by twentieth-century interpretations of the doctrine of corporate personhood. Meanwhile, as Alexander Cockburn points out ["Beat the Devil," July 2/9], the right to protest and peaceable assembly is systematically mangled, with little or no comment from the mainstream media.

In short, right-wing propaganda and mythology are being disseminated and paid for by private corporations, which are able to present themselves as responsible social actors. In fact, much of their aura of responsibility comes from their funding of such "worthwhile" cultural projects. American history is increasingly a part of the public relations industry's bag of tricks. This state of affairs deserves more than a yawn! *Susan Davis*

FEDERALIST CASE

Montclair, Calif.

Jamie Kitman and Ruth Yodaiken took Public Research, Syndicated to task for its supposed abuse of funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Kitman and Yodaiken noted that P.R.S. runs a program called "The New Federalist Papers" that, under a grant from the N.E.H., syndicates articles on the Constitution to newspapers. The authors alleged that New Federalist Papers articles are politically biased. "With authors like Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d and topics like 'Why Do We Have a Bill of Rights?'" they wrote, "it is little wonder that contemporary politics creep into these essays."

It is unfortunate that neither writer took time to read the articles that we have sent out for this series; if they had, they would not have made such a silly—and misleading—statement. Yes, we have syndicated an article by Mr. Meese—and essays by Phyllis Schlafly, Chief Justice William Rehnquist and former Chief Justice Warren Burger. But we have *also* syndicated essays by Supreme Court Justices William Brennan and Thurgood Marshall, historian Henry Steele Commager, former Senator Eugene McCarthy, former Speaker of the House Thomas P. O'Neill and Senator Joseph Biden.

In short, whenever we deal with constitutional issues that involve present controversies, we strive to present a diversity of informed opinions. The Constitution is a living document, relevant to today. Current constitutional controversies should be a legitimate and significant part of the bicentennial celebration. The use of public funds to further the debate between competing views of the Constitution hardly constitutes a misuse of public money; instead, it promotes the very process of deliberation that is fundamental to our republican form of government.

Unfortunately, one thing that cannot promote deliberation is the type of shoddy journalism supplied by Kitman and Yodaiken. So eager to attack their perceived opponents, they did not even bother to verify their charges. Let alone the relevant facts that they left out: They couldn't even get right the things that they reported. They mentioned the P.R.S. article "Why Do We Have a Bill of Rights?" for example, as if it was an attack on the Bill of Rights. In reality, that essay was a defense of the Bill of Rights, and it was not authored by a conservative, but by distinguished historian Leonard Levy (a civil libertarian liberal in the old tradition).

John G. West Jr.
Managing Editor
Public Research, Syndicated

KITMAN AND YODAIKEN REPLY

Edgewater, N.J., and New York City

Hold the phone, West. There's nothing silly—or misleading—about our assertion that contemporary politics creep into the New Federalist Papers. As you amply demonstrate, they do. That's all right by us—although some contemporary political views, such as your own oft-stated opposition to affirmative action, do seem to be aired in the papers more widely than others. Bias aside, the point we made is that the bicentennial commission professes to withhold official recognition from projects "if any significant portion thereof appears to be advocacy of a particular point of view with respect to contemporary controversial, or political, or constitutional issues." We simply noted that your series didn't seem to pass this test and yet still managed to receive the commission's blessing.

No quibbles here, however, with Susan Davis, whose point is well taken. We would gladly have continued bashing the corporations if we had only been given enough ink to do so. Owing to space limitations, the esteemed Richard Lingeman, who wears by day the editorial tartan of the flinty Navasky clan, was reluctantly called upon to excise

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EDITORIALS.

Media Massage

The campaign now concluding may not be the dirtiest or dullest in recent history, but it is certainly the most mediated. Absolutely nothing of interest has happened since this summer's conventions that has not been plotted by the candidates' handlers for media presentation or staged by the media themselves, in fact, for dramatic effect—that is to say, commercial exploitation. Of an October afternoon, George Bush may appear to be in Waterbury or Walla Walla, saying something germane to the interests of local citizens. But the town is backdrop, the locals are extras and Bush is merely using his platform that day as a set for the video that, he hopes, the networks will shoot and edit for maximum punch and transmit, gratis, to voters a few hours later. Or only a tad more manipulatively, Michael Dukakis deliberately schedules a joint appearance with Jesse Jackson in Beverly Hills for 6 o'clock on a Friday evening, an hour after daily press filing time and late enough to avoid national media exposure before the weekend TV doldrums begin. It's fashionable this week to blame the media for the low quality of the campaign, but the candidates and their retinues have been all too eager victims, and they have set themselves up for much of the resentment and disgust expressed by voters as the election approaches.

There is a theory that the press in election campaigns is an institution distinct and apart from the political system it reports on and interprets. The theory is false. The press en-

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joys its extraordinary status and privileges because it legitimizes the system, confirms the national agenda, organizes the consensus, draws the ring of acceptable debate and referees disputes within it, and marginalizes (or destroys) alternative and subversive voices. Above all, the press ennobles and expresses the myths upon which the system survives. Thus E.J. Dionne, *The New York Times*'s main man on the campaign this year, in a front-page article on the national character: "As a rule, Americans do not like the idea of elites and look upon this society as a place where all people are created equal."

Americans' love of equality, however, did not figure in *The Times*'s reporting of the campaign for all the months the Bush people were making racial appeals to whites and stigmatizing Dukakis as the protector of the furloughed black prisoner Willie Horton. The issue of racism in the campaign, in fact, had to be raised by two black people: by Dukakis staff member Donna Brazile, who was fired by her leader for talking to the press about Bush's racism and about the rumors then circulating concerning Bush's extramarital activities; and by Jesse Jackson, who was asked by Dukakis in the waning days of the campaign to see if he might charge up the black constituency Dukakis had until then ignored.

For the media, though, racism in the campaign (overt in the vulgar Bush entourage, more subtly structural in the sophisticated Dukakis operation) was a two-day story. No matter that questions of race and class inequality inform every part of the political process, and that race in particular has transformed American parties and elections since the Goldwater-Johnson contest of 1964. Consensus politics demands that "ideological" issues be submerged, and so the media plays ideology police and reframes the discourse as one in which "pragmatic" issues of character, competence, experience, personality and performance are paramount. Ideas become important only insofar as they can be described in terms of policies, divorced from ideology and useful in purely practical terms to solve a limited problem, such as tax collection or airline safety. Polling replaces analysis as demography substitutes for sociology: It is safer to describe a static system than to understand a dynamic one.

Indeed, the paradigm for a safe, appropriate campaign issue this fall was embodied in a story that seemed to have no political context at all—the million-dollar effort to free three pathetic gray whales from Arctic ice. The whales' snouts appeared more times and at greater length on TV screens in the days of their entrapment than the mugs of the two presidential candidates. The whale story was perfect: It did not involve class conflict, racism or corporate misdeeds (as environmental articles often do). In a way, it even improved on the story of Baby Jessica down a Texas well, which came exactly one year ago and served the same public function. Now it was Eskimos working side by side with white people in "this society . . . where all people are created equal." As the "tragedy" dragged on, President Reagan's enlightened policy of Soviet-American cooperation heaved into view with the arrival of two Soviet ice-breakers.

There is always a problem that the media will confuse their myths and begin to occupy their own skewed ideological frames. Can the doughty Eskimos dig enough air holes and quickly train Michael Dukakis to follow them into open water before his migratory window freezes over? Will the Russians save George Bush from the white wastes? Has the Democratic Party fallen into a deep hole in Texas, never to be seen again? Answers to these questions, and much, much more after November 8.

AGAINST THE WIND

Hurricane Joan, which swept across the Nicaraguan coast at Bluefields in October, is not the first natural disaster to hit Nicaragua in recent years. On December 23, 1972, Managua was flattened by an earthquake. Then, Richard Nixon sent a personal message to Anastasio Somoza: "Pat and I wish you a happy Christmas, if you can have a happy Christmas under those circumstances."

The United States also sent $12.7 million in emergency relief aid, whereupon the Nicaraguan National Guard made out like bandits. Troops commanded by Somoza's son, Tachito, moved through the commercial districts like termites, looting whatever they could lay their hands on. Other Somoza cronies cornered the housing market. The orgy of corruption so disgusted opponents, in fact, that it marked the beginning of the end of the Somoza dynasty.

The State Department says Nicaragua will not get a penny for Hurricane Joan because its present government cannot be trusted to use the assistance properly. A humanitarian alternative, fortunately, is available through the Quest for Peace, Hurricane Relief Fund, Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782. For further information, call (301) 699-0042.

James Aronson

James Aronson, who died October 21 at the age of 73, was a gentle, soft-spoken, generous man with a rare and intelligent zeal for exposing venality in both government and the press. He was also that welcome exception, a tough reporter who refused to seek refuge in a comfortable and conforming chair in some mainstream newsroom.

After World War II, he founded (with British journalist Cedric Belfrage) the *National Guardian*, a radical weekly that he edited for twenty years, courageously attacking the nation's cold war policies when they were at their most gelid. For this he had his troubles with the witch hunters of those bleak times, but he persevered in his ferocious belief in democracy. His 1970 book, *The Press and the Cold War*, is the classic indictment of the media's fevered encouragement of confrontation with the Soviet Union.

In his later years, Jim Aronson brought his special view of how journalism should be practiced to fortunate students at New York University and Hunter College, where he was

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Thomas Hunter Professor Emeritus of Communications. In 1979 he became the first professor from the United States invited to teach journalism in the People's Republic of China. While there he wrote for *The Nation*, as he had on many other occasions over the years. Our magazine and the rest of the press is the poorer because his calm voice is no longer here to help keep us alert and honest.

$10,000 Scorch

In 1986, Associate Attorney General Stephen Trott ushered in the era of zero tolerance by urging Congress to adopt a "scorched earth policy" in the war on drugs. Today Congress, routed in the war, is in full retreat, destroying everything in its path. Drug enforcement authorities over the past ten years have been overwhelmed by the skillful and well-armed forces of drug capitalism. The response of Congress has been to turn against relatively innocent bystanders, the nation's estimated 23 million recreational drug users, most of whom neither abuse drugs nor sell them for profit.

The drug bill approved on October 22 is most notable for its "user accountability" provisions. The legislation will disqualify drug offenders from getting college loans and certain other government benefits. It also imposes civil penalties of up to $10,000 for "possession of small amounts of certain controlled substances." The legislation does not make any distinction between types of drugs, and "small amounts" could theoretically be microscopic.

The civil penalties were introduced by House Republicans hoping to arm Federal prosecutors with a quick and easy way to punish drug users. A criminal offense must be proved "beyond a reasonable doubt"; a civil penalty can be assessed merely on the "preponderance of evidence." Several Representatives were intoxicated by the prospect of rounding up recreational drug users. Hamilton Fish Jr. of New York suggested drug enforcement authorities should "target a certain geographical area with a zero tolerance operation." Bill McCollum envisioned "a sweep in New York City," though not of his home district in central Florida.

After constitutional nitpickers raised some questions, the House bill was amended to require that prosecutors prove possession "beyond a reasonable doubt" even in the civil cases. But that minor revision does not change the fact that in civil cases the Justice Department makes its finding first, and the defendant must appeal to gain a trial. The guy fined $10,000 for having a joint will not go to court with the presumption of innocence, as he would in a criminal trial for drug possession. He will arrive in court with the judgment of the government already hanging over his head. Thus the scorched earth policy claims the constitutional presumption of innocence as its first victim.

Two Federal prosecutors, who asked not to be named, expressed reluctance about doing Congress' dirty work in the drug war. An overworked assistant U.S. Attorney cited his already heavy caseload and asked, "When am I supposed to do these pissant drug cases?" These prosecutors say drug cases are so common now that they rarely pursue those involving less than two kilograms of cocaine. (In Miami, 500-kilo cases are no longer rare.) One experienced drug prosecutor wondered of the new law, "What does it do for the role of police in society to have to arrest people for as little as a vial of cocaine?" Cary Copeland, a Deputy Associate Attorney General, is more optimistic that the law can be enforced. "It isn't something we can't accommodate. We don't expect to have millions of cases. We won't be going out frisking people on the streets of New York to see if they have a joint."

In other words, the law will not be enforced as Representative McCollum and others envision but, unsurprisingly, as the Justice Department finds convenient. It is unlikely, though certainly not impossible, that vindictive Federal prosecutors could target—and bankrupt—their political opponents. There probably won't be any zero-tolerance sweeps on the streets of New York City, or in the cocaine-leavened Florida banking industry for that matter. Most likely is the arbitrary prosecution of decent folk who are minding their own business and happen to have "small amounts of certain controlled substances." Texas Senator Phil Gramm, for one, hopes to punish "people who have jobs and lead otherwise fairly normal lives." Welcome to post-Reagan America: Act fairly normal and the Feds can still sock you for ten grand.

JEFFERSON MORLEY

MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The truly extraordinary fact about the Iran/*contra* scandal is that not one of the perpetrators has been the loser by his or her involvement, and that the handful of those indicted are suffering no greater inconvenience than the wait for a pardon. Especially insulting is the decision of Michael Ledeen, one of the original malefactors, to try to turn a buck by rushing out a book. Ludicrously titled *Perilous Statecraft* and evasively subtitled *An Insider's Account of the Iran-Contra Affair*, the volume combines Ledeen's two most salient features: a whining, turgid prose style and a chronic inability to tell the truth. It even contradicts the shifty testimony he gave during the Congressional investigation. For example, the book claims that Ledeen urged dropping "the hostage question" in October 1985, yet the record shows that in December 1985 he urged the C.I.A. to employ Manucher Ghorbanifar as an unofficial envoy to Teheran.

Ledeen's hubris may be about to beckon the nemesis that has been for so long merited. I have here a letter written to the Congressional committee that oversees the Justice Department and the F.B.I. It is signed by Noel Koch, who between 1981 and 1986 served at the Pentagon as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and as Di-

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rector of the Office for Special Planning. Koch had hired Ledeen, on the recommendation of senior Reaganites, as a consultant on "terrorism." He was, he writes, unimpressed by his subordinate: "In a collegial environment, it seemed cavalier to challenge what becomes transparent crap at a distance. . . . when I had requested Ledeen's help, he had demonstrated no capacity to contribute anything of value."

To contribute, no, but perhaps to extract? Koch describes a farcical trip that he took with Ledeen to Italy, discovering the intense animosity and contempt that the man aroused in U.S. and Italian circles alike:

> Subsequent to this trip Ledeen resumed his habit of stopping by to read the classified material. This was done in my outer office. As I was increasingly busy, I saw less and less of him and, when I did see him, most of his input consisted of attacks on the CIA, and the then-Deputy Director of Operations, and especially allegations that the Agency had covered up a Soviet role in the attempted assassination of the Pope. After listening to repeated pronouncements on the point, I asked Ledeen to give me a brief paper on the matter, along with certain documentation he claimed to have. None of this materialized and, shortly, the Soviets and the Pope and the CIA ceased to be a topic.
>
> Then, at some point in 1984, Ledeen came to my office with a piece of paper on which was written, in his hand, two titles.
>
> These were reports he said he needed to have for something he was working on. The reports, as he explained, were the property of the CIA, but in the possession of the FBI; the FBI couldn't give them up without the approval of the CIA, and he couldn't approach the CIA for reasons that weren't clear, but presumably had to do with whatever underlay his expressed hostility toward the Agency. And so I was asked to acquire these documents for his use.
>
> I said I'd look into it, put the paper with the titles in a desk drawer and forgot about it. I had no intention of pursuing the matter.
>
> Ledeen was back the next week for one of his reading sessions and put his head in to ask what progress I was making in getting the reports. I told him I hadn't gotten to it.
>
> This became a ritual and, as it progressed, the requests came sometimes twice a week, sometimes over the phone, and with what must be described as urgency.
>
> Finally, I called my colleague at the FBI, "Buck" Revell, on secure and said: "I'm going to give you the titles of two reports, and I'd like you to tell me if there is anything in either of them that would interest me."

Koch goes on, in his extremely comprehensive letter, to explain a fine point of bureaucracy and security:

> The titles of those reports were (and are) very precise, and stylized in such a way that they could not have been guessed at, or hit upon accidentally under any conceivable circumstances. Moreover, given compartmentation procedures, it seemed strange that anyone could be in a position to know those titles and yet not be in a position to have access to them. As pure information, the titles would have been as sensitive and inaccessible as the reports themselves.
>
> At this point I told my executive assistant that Ledeen should have no further access to the classified traffic. I told him to cut it off without being obvious. The next time Ledeen came by, he was told the material had been taken to one of our subsidiary offices. When he asked if he could go there to read it, he was told no. This occurred one more time and after that Ledeen stopped visiting. Shortly I learned he had joined the NSC as a consultant. I took no affirmative steps to have Ledeen removed from our own rolls, but resolved that he should not have access to our offices any more for anything beyond a brief social visit if he happened to be in the building—as he frequently was.

Koch watched with a certain astonishment as Ledeen continued to find crevices of the Administration in which to lodge. His most pressing concern arose from his knowledge of the Pollard spy case, whose principal defendant could not have known in advance what classified material to ask for, and, "therefore, someone had to tell him *what* to steal and since he was stealing it via the computer terminal, he had to 'ask' the computer data bases for that information in a very precise way."

Koch arranged to be interviewed by two F.B.I. agents about his worries but was told after a two-hour debriefing that they were interested only in Soviet military intelligence penetration. He adds sourly that, nonetheless, "I was told I would be contacted by the appropriate people. That has never occurred." Hence his approach to the Congressional oversight authorities. As Koch concludes his letter:

> Ledeen roved throughout a number of sensitive U.S. government agencies, jumping from one consultancy to the next (each time just as he was being ousted from the preceding one) and availing himself of material bearing on some of the most sensitive matters facing the government in the past eight years; was directly instrumental in causing the Iran arms for hostages mess, an act of mischief doubly astonishing in that he had no authority to represent U.S. interests in any fashion whatsoever and his role, in spite of his connections within the Administration, was that of an outsider; lied about efforts to acquire by ruse classified information for which he had no legitimate claim; and while he lived in Italy, was carried by the CIA chief of station in Rome as an agent of influence of a foreign government, according to a current ranking official of the CIA who was associated with the activities of the Rome station in that period.

This was exactly what recommended Ledeen to the Reaganites, as well as to the editors of *Commentary*, *The New Republic* and *The American Spectator*. Remember, too, the testimony of Duane Clarridge of the C.I.A., given before Congress on August 4, 1987, on the most crucial issue of all—the date when the Administration first started to deal arms to Iran. Placing this date in a period when there were no hostages in Teheran or Beirut, Clarridge said:

> I think the strategic opening to Iran, the idea, the concept, the desire, began early in this Administration, *probably going back to '81, certainly to '82*, in the form of General Haig, Mr. McFarlane when he was counselor to the State Department, and Mr. Ledeen when he was working there for Mr. McFarlane. [Emphasis added.]

Will Congress ignore this extremely serious letter, from a former high-level Pentagon official, because of the embarrassment that will be caused if the right questions are asked?

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Much Ado About Nothings

EDWARD SOREL

AT ANDOVER THEY MADE FUN OF ME BECAUSE I TALKED LIKE A SISSY.
AT BROOKLINE HIGH THEY LAUGHED AT ME BECAUSE I WAS SUCH A DRONE.
THEY THOUGHT I WAS A NOTHING. BUT I WAS DETERMINED TO BECOME SOMEONE IMPORTANT.
ME TOO. THEY DON'T LAUGH AT YOU WHEN YOU'RE PRESIDENT!
NO SIR! NOT WHEN YOU'RE THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE WORLD!
NO. THEY WON'T LAUGH THEN. NOT EVEN IF YOU'RE SHORT.
AND SO MY FELLOW AMERICANS... EVEN IF YOU THINK I'M JUST A FRONT FOR A BUNCH OF FASCISTS...
...AND EVEN IF YOU THINK I'M BORING AND LACK PASSION...
NEVERTHELESS IT'S YOUR PATRIOTIC DUTY...
...TO GET OUT THERE AND VOTE!!
EVEN IF YOU CAN'T SEE WHY.
Edward Sorel

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ARTICLES.

'NOT JUST TREE-HUGGERS'

Idaho Battles Weapons Plants

SCOTT RIDLEY

The radioactive skeletons that have been shaken out of the government's long-dark atomic closet in recent weeks are rattling around just as the Department of Energy is about to propose a new generation of nuclear weapons plants. And across the country, citizens infuriated by the years of official lying about safety procedures and accidents at aging facilities in Washington, Ohio, Colorado and South Carolina are pressuring state and Congressional leaders to oppose any new plants, or at least to guarantee their safety.

Some of the most intense resistance has come in the high desert country of southeastern Idaho, where a network of environmentalists, farmers and schoolteachers threatens to derail construction of the nation's first new nuclear weapons production plant in twenty-five years. The debate now raging appeared unlikely just a year ago. Since 1949, the government has carried out nuclear research in plants scattered across 890 square miles of desert known as the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL). Ten thousand men and women work at INEL and, in a region best known for potatoes, the high-tech facilities are a source of immense local pride. Large blue signs at the reservation's entrances declare, "Quality People Doing Quality Research," and placemats in restaurants thirty miles away are imprinted with INEL's "historic" achievements: engines for nuclear powered submarines and the nation's only experimental breeder reactor.

Much of the work at INEL has been nuclear research and defense-related development, with little production of weapons. But under the Reagan Administration, the Department of Energy's budget has become more than 60 percent defense related; research has been slashed and proposals for producing nuclear weapons themselves have proliferated. In August 1986 the D.O.E. selected INEL as the home for a billion-dollar laser plant, which would give the facility a direct role in nuclear weapons production. The Special Isotope Separator (S.I.S.) would refine plutonium shipped from Hanford, Washington, and send it on to Rocky Flats, Colorado, for manufacture into components for warheads.

Unlike Colorado, South Carolina and Washington, where protests have kept plant mismanagement and safety issues on the local front pages, the pronuclear climate in Idaho appeared ideal for the S.I.S. Idaho's Congressional delegation, led by Senator James McClure, succeeded in just about doubling the $56 million S.I.S. funding request to $96 million. The contract for the plant's design was signed with Bechtel. Governor Cecil Andrus, local mayors, the business community and the state A.F.L.-C.I.O. got solidly behind the project. Ground was to be broken in late 1989, the plant operational by 1995.

Everything seemed to be on track until a group of local activists known as the Snake River Alliance pressed Andrus and state environmental officials for expanded hearings on the environmental impact of the plant. Liz Paul, a swimming and ski instructor from Ketchum, initiated a campaign that drew in experts from the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, D.C., and nuclear weapons activists from South Carolina and Washington.

An initial round of meetings generated critical media coverage statewide. (One editorial called it a "high crime" that Idaho was receiving so much weapons money and so little for essential energy research.) The alliance and a growing number of Idaho residents expressed concern about contamination of the Snake River Plain Aquifer, which provides most of the region's water and flows under the INEL domain. The Energy Department has already admitted dumping an unspecified amount of radioactive material at INEL from the early 1950s to 1970. Many also worry about the danger of the transport of plutonium, which has a half-life of 24,000 years and has been called one of the most toxic substances on earth. In 1986, a truck carrying low-level radioactive material swerved to avoid a farm vehicle, went off a bridge on Route 84 and dumped part of its cargo in the Snake River. Officials reported no release of radioactivity.

Supporters of the S.I.S. project say fear of contamination is unfounded. The real danger, they claim, is the loss of jobs at INEL. Citing D.O.E. figures, they say the plant would pump $50 million annually into the state economy and provide 450 construction jobs and 750 permanent jobs. They have also pinned their hopes on spinoff developments from the new laser technology. Some envision the INEL area becoming a "Laser Valley" similar to Silicon Valley. To counter these predictions of a brave new world of employment, the Snake River Alliance produced television commercials featuring Mariel Hemingway, an Idaho native, denouncing the tradeoff of jobs for nuclear weapons production.

The project's supporters responded by forming a group of their own called Yes, Yes, S.I.S., and began running television spots that featured local workers and residents who supported the plant. They also staged a 400-car parade and sent pickets to Snake River Alliance meetings. Lane Allgood, the manager of an electrical supply store in Idaho Falls, helped organize Yes, Yes, S.I.S., along with Idaho Falls Mayor Tom Campbell and local Chamber of Commerce president Ira Koplow. Allgood says most of his business and that of other members of Yes, Yes, S.I.S. comes from INEL and they fear the local economy will stagnate without the plant. The Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, an organization of 300 major businesses, endorsed the project, as

Scott Ridley is a writer and policy analyst based in Washington, D.C. This article was written under a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

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did the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Thousands of people attended a series of environmental impact hearings in Idaho Falls, Twin Falls and Boise in late March, and most of the 508 who testified opposed the plant. Jerry Jayne, a longtime INEL worker, said that both jobs and the environment are important, but the fundamental issue is that the plutonium is not needed.

According to Tom Cochran, senior staff scientist for the Natural Resources Defense Council, the D.O.E.'s reserve supply of plutonium, including plutonium scrap and plutonium available from the retirement of missiles under new arms reduction treaties, makes S.I.S. a "senseless waste of money." About twenty-five tons of plutonium would be available from these sources. By comparison, S.I.S. is expected to refine five to eight tons during its brief eight-year lifetime.

Last February, Energy Secretary John Herrington told a House appropriations subcommittee that the nation is "awash in plutonium" and that we have more than we need for new weapons production. Herrington has since retracted the statement and D.O.E. officials maintain that S.I.S. is needed to provide "redundancy" and "technological diversity" for U.S. weapons production.

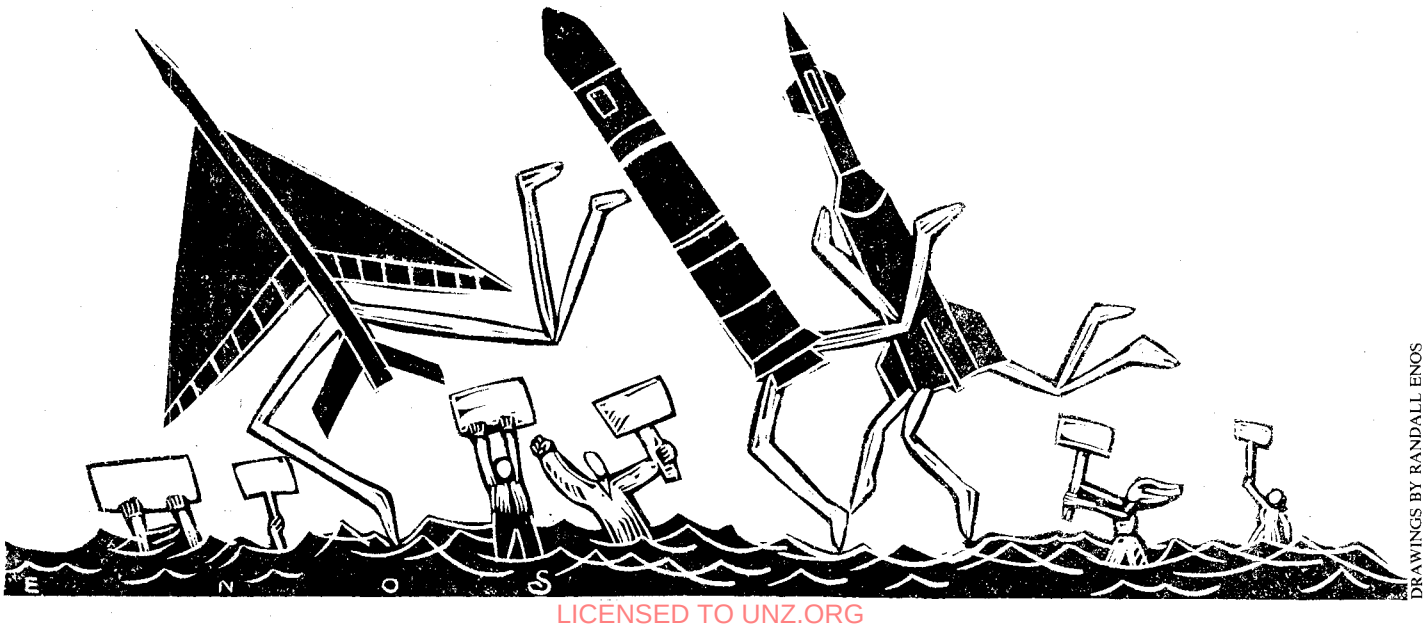
Oregon Governor Neil Goldschmidt wrote Herrington that "S.I.S. should not be built—or at least [should be] deferred" until the D.O.E. makes significant headway on radioactive waste cleanup. Catholic Bishop Sylvester Treinen of Idaho maintained that the S.I.S. plant represented a "grave moral issue" and should not be built while millions of people are starving. The project also drew criticism from conservatives. Mark Stubbs, chair of the Twin Falls County Republican Party, said, "It's not just the nuts and flakes and tree-huggers of Blaine County" who oppose S.I.S. "There are some good Republicans who feel it is dangerous and a cause for concern."

Many Idahoans believe S.I.S. is a first step toward making INEL a major weapons production facility and swinging the spotlight away from Savannah River and Hanford. The Energy Department pushed production past safe limits at both weapons complexes to produce plutonium and tritium, the two key radioactive ingredients in nuclear weapons. Ground water has been contaminated at both sites. The cost of cleaning up Hanford alone was estimated last summer at $48.5 billion, and the production reactor has been shut down. The cost of cleaning up similar contamination at seventeen weapons plants has been put at $110 billion by the D.O.E., which projects that the task will take fifty-seven years.

At Savannah River, following a series of safety-related cutbacks in production, the Du Pont Company announced in October 1987 that it would not renew its thirty-seven-year-old contract for the weapons reactors. Du Pont's announcement came just hours before a federally funded National Research Council panel released a report that found the nation's bomb production reactors were rapidly becoming too old to be operated safely. The revelations of thirty significant unreported incidents at the four Savannah River reactors followed a year later.

On August 3, 1988, Energy Secretary Herrington confirmed Idahoans' fears that their state would become a major nuclear weapons center by announcing that INEL had been selected as the site for a new tritium reactor, in addition to the S.I.S. project. Governor Andrus says he believes the tritium reactor will not be built because it duplicates one planned for Savannah River, and the Federal budget won't support it. The recent revelations of accidents at Savannah River may change that, however, and the business and labor communities as well as the Idaho Congressional delegation are backing the tritium reactor.

Local groups in Idaho and elsewhere have helped give unprecedented visibility to the nation's most secretive industry—nuclear weapons production. In South Carolina, for example, the local Energy Research Foundation, together with the Natural Resource Defense Council and Greenpeace, are filing suit to require an environmental impact statement and public hearings before Savannah River can be reopened. More important, these and other groups have now begun to frame the debate over the next generation of reactors that will produce tritium and plutonium for the U.S. nuclear arsenal.



DRAWINGS BY RANDALL ENOS

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The Department of Energy's national blueprint for new weapons facilities is due in December, and there is growing speculation that the revelations about safety hazards at older nuclear facilities will be used to build an urgent case for the new reactors. The report detailing accidents at Savannah River during the past thirty years was compiled in 1985. Some observers claim its release is part of an old Washington budget game designed to establish the critical condition of a project before requesting new funding.

Regardless of the D.O.E.'s manuevering, Congress and the new Administration will have to weigh the urgency of building new weapons facilities not only against Federal budget constraints but also against heightened resistance from local people. It is likely that Idaho will remain a hot spot. As Idaho Senator Steven Symms—the S.I.S. project's strongest supporter—has observed, "If it can't be built here, it can't be built anywhere." □

CAUGHT IN THE TUNA NETS

The Slaughter Of Dolphins

ANDREW DAVIS

In the early 1970s, during the heady days of the environmental movement, activists urged consumers to boycott canned tuna because the international tuna fleet was slaughtering hundreds of thousands of dolphins in purse seine nets. In 1972, responding to public indignation over the killing, Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act (M.M.P.A.), a landmark piece of legislation aimed at protecting not only dolphins but all marine mammals. Since its passage, however, more than 1 million dolphins have been legally killed by the U.S. tuna fleet under an M.M.P.A. weakened during successive Congressional reauthorizations. This fall, Congress once again was unwilling to enforce the original intent of the M.M.P.A. and reauthorized the act with no major provisions to end the dolphin slaughter. Dolphin deaths in tuna nets are on the rise, and nearly 250,000 dolphins have been killed in the past two years alone, prompting a new tuna boycott.

The U.S. tuna companies, the world's largest tuna importers, have the leverage to curtail the dolphin kill by refusing to buy a tuna catch that involved the purse seining of dolphins. This past January, a coalition of environmental groups launched a boycott of canned tuna to pressure the main importers—Ralston Purina, H.J. Heinz and Bumble Bee—to take action. The coalition, led by Earth Island Institute and the Humane Society of the United States, expanded the boycott in September to include tuna pet food products. The boycott may have already produced some results. Although both companies deny any connection, in August Ralston Purina divested itself of Chicken of the Sea, and privately owned Bumble Bee was sold to Pillsbury.

Less than 10 percent of the tuna caught worldwide involves using purse seines on dolphins. But for reasons that continue to baffle scientists, the prized yellowfin tuna tend to school beneath herds of dolphin only in the eastern tropical Pacific, a 6-million-square-mile triangle of ocean extending from southern California to central Chile. Tuna fishermen have capitalized on this quirk of nature with deadly efficiency. Using the dolphins as expendable lures, the tuna fishing crews herd the terrified animals with speed boats and explosives and surround them with the purse seines. The nets, up to a mile long, are then cinched shut, like pulling the drawstring on a purse. Any of the dolphins that can't be chased out of the net slowly suffocate or are crushed by the weight of the tuna as the net is hauled in.

The M.M.P.A. has done little to end this practice. Initially, it imposed a moratorium on hunting, harassing, capturing and killing all marine mammals and specifically stated that dolphin kill levels should be scaled down "to insignificant levels approaching 0." However, bowing to industry pressure, Congress granted the U.S. tuna fleet a two-year grace period to develop new procedures to minimize dolphin mortality. No new techniques were forthcoming, but in those two years 500,000 more dolphins died in U.S. tuna nets. Lawsuits from the environmental community then forced Congress to adopt a quota, originally set at 78,000, to be reduced to 20,500 by 1981. Instead of abolishing the intentional netting of dolphins, however, the M.M.P.A.'s quota system has institutionalized the practice.

In recent testimony at Senate hearings on the dolphin problem, Greenpeace USA called for a four-year phase-out of purse seining, but the plea fell on deaf ears. Despite Congress's pledge to reduce the dolphin kill, the quota of 20,500 now seems sacrosanct. "Even though we all say the objective is a zero take, you're sort of locked into this number. Once you put a number in print, it becomes the rule," says Nancy Foster, director of the Office of Protected Resources for the National Marine Fisheries Service (N.M.F.S.), the administrators and enforcers of the M.M.P.A.

Undeniably, the U.S. tuna fleet has made significant progress in reducing the overall number of dolphins killed. Dolphin-saving techniques have improved and are employed on a regular basis. According to the N.M.F.S., the dolphin kill level dropped precipitously from a staggering 368,600 in 1972 to less than 20,000 in 1987. But whistleblowers from the N.M.F.S. observer program say that kill levels are actually much higher. Kill estimates are extrapolated from the logs of Federal observers who accompany a percentage of the U.S. fleet's trips each year. In May, three former N.M.F.S. observers made public accusations that coercion is widespread against observers on tuna boats. One observer said crew members threw explosives to chase him below deck when purse seining caused high dolphin mortality. The one major change in the current reauthorized M.M.P.A. requires observers to be on all U.S. boats, but stories like these

Andrew Davis is assistant media director of Greenpeace USA and writes about environmental issues.

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raise questions about the effectiveness of such observers.

The main reason that U.S. kill rates have plummeted is the change in the composition of the fleet. It shrank as dramatically as the dolphin kill rates, dropping from ninety-three boats when the 20,500 quota was set in 1981, to thirty-five boats today. The reduced fleet, operating comfortably within the quota, used nets on dolphins 97 percent of the time in 1987, up from 50 percent in 1981. Many of the original boats are still killing dolphins in the eastern tropical Pacific. Between 1981 and 1987 at least twenty-one U.S. boats, ostensibly to dodge high operating and labor costs, reflagged and joined the foreign fleet—effectively skirting the M.M.P.A.'s control.

The dolphin kill for the foreign fleet dwarfs the U.S. kill levels. To keep the foreign fleet in line, the M.M.P.A. called for curtailing imports from countries with kill rates that didn't meet the U.S. standard. Those regulations have never been enforced, and no M.M.P.A. sanctions have ever been imposed on a foreign nation for killing dolphins. Stunning proof of the carnage attributed to the foreign fleet was released last March, just one month before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee met to review the tuna/dolphin issue. A former government biologist, Sam LaBudde, passed himself off as an itinerant fisherman and landed a job on a Panamanian tuna boat. Claiming he was shooting a video to share the adventure with his family, LaBudde spent five months filming the purse-seine fishing.

"I saw hundreds of animals being drowned, mutilated and butchered," LaBudde said. "Many of the animals were caught in the mesh and hoisted out of the water. Some will fall back into the sea as flippers and beaks are broken or ripped out of their bodies only to become ensnared moments later and pulled out once again." LaBudde told of one case in which nearly 200 dolphins were slowly drowned to catch less than a dozen tuna.

In 1984, in an effort to rein in the foreign fleet, Congress instructed the Commerce Department to strengthen existing provisions in the M.M.P.A., restricting tuna imports from any country that did not have dolphin kill levels comparable to the U.S. fleet's. But not until this past March, nearly four years later, did Commerce release some weak interim foreign regulations, and these do not even take full effect until 1991.

N.M.F.S. justified the footdragging by saying that imposing sanctions on the foreign fleet would only cause foreign fishing crews to sell their tuna in new markets, thereby mitigating U.S. economic leverage. However, within weeks of the release of the LaBudde film in Europe (the second largest market for canned tuna) a Greenpeace-sponsored motion to ban tuna imports from countries that net dolphins was supported by all parties in the European Parliament and is moving briskly toward ratification.

Sadly, although the end of purse seining may come, it will not be because of the M.M.P.A. The dolphin population in the eastern tropical Pacific is becoming so depleted that seining for yellowfin tuna may prove to be economically unfeasible. Preliminary figures from an extensive study begun by N.M.F.S. in 1987 show that the population of some of the principal dolphin stocks have plummeted 80 percent. More than 6 million dolphins have been killed in purse seines since the technique was first developed in the late 1950s, and the slaughter continues as the M.M.P.A.'s reauthorization allows the U.S. and foreign fleets carte blanche to kill dolphins. One thing is clear: The dolphins cannot survive a gutted M.M.P.A. □

THE CAT SCAN OF OUR ERA

Actor as Incarnation

SEYMOUR KRIM

Is this actually taking place? Is Chuck Wachtel really lecturing me that Robert De Niro has "greatness," as if 8x10 glossy performers truly existed on the same plane as writers, were worthy of the same exalted words that my gang used to use forty-nine years ago for D.H. Lawrence or even (the thought blushes, slightly) Clifford Odets? I look at Chuck with wonder. Why the immortal garlands for an acting-school putz who is actually the separately raised son of a real artist, my old tormented buddy Bob De Niro, who once floored me with a punch when I downgraded one of his paintings in the Village forties?

Why should a gourmet word-maven like young Chuck (*Joe the Engineer*, William Morrow) care about De Niro or Al Pacino or William Hurt or any of these overpriced replicators, duplicators, impersonators, when the names that formerly came from his lips attached to the word "great" were William Carlos Williams and Hubert Selby Jr.? Why?

But I know the answer even as I'm sending up these disingenuous smoke signals, so does everyone of my generation who almost half a century ago chose writing as the most heroic and venturesome act they could commit—we all know that the actor/performer has stolen the lightning! Yes, the "player," whom muttering writers for the past zillion years have usually treated like an infantile textbook case, your ultimate ditzy narcissist, has walked right into history with the authority of a new nose job. Media technology and "performing" (gawd!) go together, the perfect fit, and the hero-novelist under whose image our projection of ourselves flourished seems a dewy anachronism from the thirties.

The major American novelists of the new canon (Gass, Barth, Hawkes, Coover, etc.) are no longer known on the street corner, probably not even in the majority of classrooms at the local university, but that void has been filled by The Performer—the new galvanizing hero/-ine, the identifying magnet of the age. Even though the performer might be helpless without a script, He and She have become so magnified by the new technology that they've also become representatives of us all, hands down, no contest.

Seymour Krim writes essays for The Nation *and other publications.*

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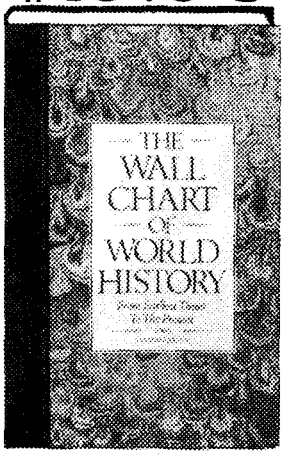

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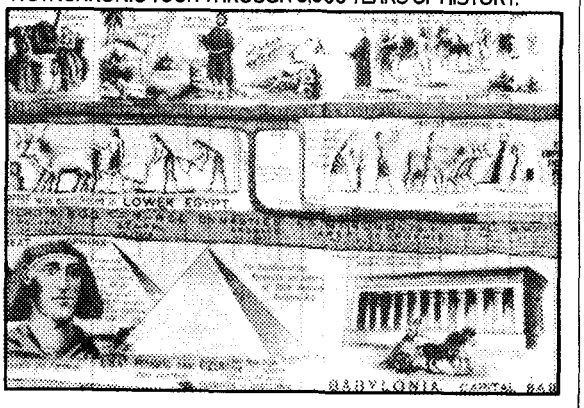

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Yes, exited poet Howard Moss, vanished essayist Milt Klonsky, lost prose jeweler Eli Waldron—fellow downtown votaries at the Temple of the Word!—what a death grin you'd all come up with if I could tell you who now calls the shots for truth, sensitivity, perception, grandeur. Unbelievable, but it's the pretty boy and girl down the block who have grown past their high-school intimidation of the rest of us, have grown into valor at those outer edges we always assumed we owned—the dangerous, the existential, that naked self-exposure.

Can you believe it from (jayzus!) a player? Can you believe, further, that they now and for some time have snatched from literary celebrity the fires of legend? That sixty years after Gertrude Stein and Scott Fitzgerald, the latest dish about John Belushi's O.D. and David Bowie's androgyny and Stacy Keach's English jail-time is riveting precisely because these lives are more adventurous than that of the foul-mouthed poet at the end of the White Horse bar? The players and their cohorts are—I dread to say it—encountering more fresh human combinations, playing dangerously with more despair, more beauty, more money, more everything, than any other expressive segment of our society. Hoot if you want to, but isn't this the strange new meaning of avant-garde, being shot further out than the rest of us?

If the soaring American novelist of my young manhood has fallen into the automobile graveyard, and the bohemian poets and painters whom I knew wrote the final words on bourgeois defiance—Bodenheim, de Kooning, Kline, Delmore Schwartz, down to the kid ass-kickers like Ginsberg and Larry Rivers—it has remained for the (oh no!) actor to bring originality to the 1980s, where the nobler arts have repeated the story. Yes, like it or not, the actor worth the name makes new life out of life, Tom Signorelli breaking into my family phone call with the unwitting complicity of the New York Telephone Company because of an "emergency"—this time to tell me to see him in Mario Puzo's *The Sicilian*! What chutzpah. What wing-walking charm. Sure, it's a stunt; to the performer existence is pure show, and this may be the true CAT scan of our era in a way that professional thinkers are too desolated to accept.

What was inner for all the years of literary dominance is now being made outer. In a world as blindingly fast and forgettable as ours, truth is what can be seen and heard and sensualized. Look into the pit, friends: Admit that Samuel Beckett's one-volume trilogy, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable*, will never get the "readers" it got as the theater piece *I'll Go On*, and that the recent seventeen-hour Bloomsday radio read of all of *Ulysses* was a rainfall to those who have never been able to get through the onslaught of print. Admit!

Is dramatization, and the almighty actor, then, going to be the externalized shorthand of life for the foreseeable future? I don't see how we can deny it, even while artifice drips from this vision like a false eyelash loaded with laboratory tears. Yes, our reality is now in the hands of professional showoffs, geniuses with no conviction except the culture of narcissism; but history has conspired to make them lightning rods. Did you say frightening clods? Play with my words any which way, the contemporary actor is now a metaphor for you and me, unlike the sequestered stars of yesteryear; and if we too wanted to be world class, we would stand up tall like Garrison Keillor and let the lights and music wash over us like a heavenly blow job instead of cowering in the study. Face it: The word-makers now follow the trail of the players into the stardust mists of America, when once they would have fried them for breakfast.

Can you imagine intellectuals, friends of mine, teachers, essayists, lawyers, a shrink or two, actually buying books with titles like *From Mime to Thine* so they can "study" the ultimate narcissistic craft with an eye to crashing the movies as actors or, failing that, director/producers? Yet even as I howl at the joke I understand their humiliating need to cash in their lives, their professions, their self-respect. America, "the oldest modern country" (G. Stein), was still living up to its original clairvoyance when it unhesitatingly thrust Ronald Reagan into the White House with a roar from its unconscious—outta my way, movie critics who are blocking the future!

Does this mean, then, that those of us who have the old-fashioned brains and dash to write our own scripts, not just mouth them and prance and pirouette to chalk marks, must take a distant back seat to these darlings of first technology and then the world without going berserk? You've got it, luv. Oprah Winfrey knocks Joan Didion *and* May Swenson out of the box, Sean Penn devastates Derek Walcott, Arnold Schwarzenegger strides over print-shackled Hemingway as if Ernie were a bug. The true picture and sound of humanity in the late twentieth century is more than this pitiful black-and-white version I'm asking you to ingest right here, that's the message that's coming through, and it is

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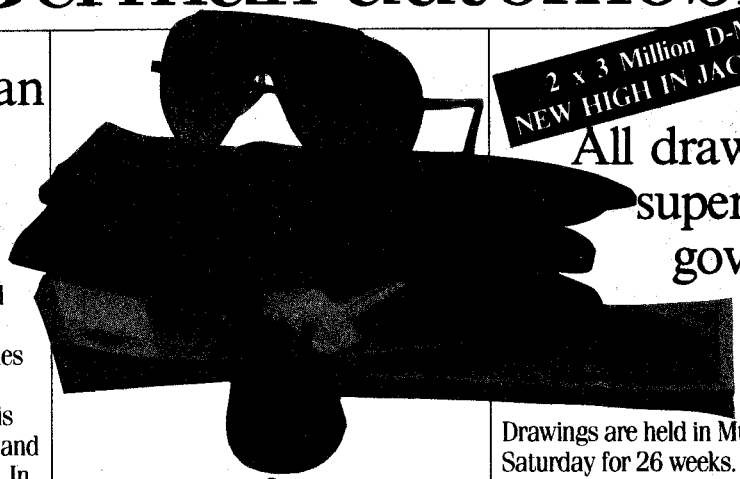

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being carried to the ends of the planet by the (who??) crusaders of velvet and plush.

Obvious question: Are such frail creatures up to the role of culture hero, not just getting it on for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or *Crocodile Dundee* and triumphing over, say, the flu during the shoot, but bearing the image of humanity into the mysterious, roiling future? Yes, better believe it, such frail creatures must be up to it because history has picked this hour like a tolling bell and these once profile-obsessed mummers have been chosen to act out our own profile obsessions as well. It is no longer a question of who is worthy or unworthy to lead; the question is, always was, Who fits the needs of a new human tilt, who radiates the beams that once belonged to Byron, who has a special line from the back seat of that Mercedes to Mount Olympus?

The reward is no longer just immediate adoration if you're a member of the world's oldest gotta-be-loved-like-mad-or-I'll-perish profession. Although even that part of it symbolizes the mass yearning for approval of the age—a blending of hungers, you might say!—but the new kingdom of the player goes far beyond that. We have entered the era in which the rouged and primped purveyors of make-believe are now the world's embodiment of the Real Thing; the purveyors themselves are slowly beginning to think they are the Real Thing ("I've decided not to trust Gorbachev just yet"—Yves Montand), and in time it will be so acknowledged. Pity the poor writer or philosopher, scientist or composer, who still condescends to these unexpected icons—dare open your mouth and you will be lynched by the cry of sour grapes, envy, datedness, undignified lust for universality and all its perks.

Universality, all you Little League Goethes who thought it would be found in a book—how wrong we were. □

Heroin

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

"covert" operation since the Vietnam War.

When the banquets, speeches and parades were over, Zia and Bush left the summer heat of Islamabad for the cool, pine forest resort of Muree. There the two leaders got down to business. They clarified the details of the Afghan arms pipeline and agreed on unprecedented requests from the Pakistani military regime for $3.2 billion in new U.S. aid—over and above the $2 billion that would be allocated to the Afghan operation. According to numerous Pakistani sources close to the talks, Bush also intervened to secure a $40 million contract for the General Electric Company to supply Pakistan with gas turbine units for a power plant—even though G.E. had been fairly outbid by tenders from the Japanese firm Mitsubishi and a German-based multinational, the Brown-Boveri Corporation.

Whatever his motives in the General Electric deal, Bush's handling of the drug issue raises serious questions about his objectives in Pakistan. The Vice President heaped praise on the Zia government's antinarcotics program. At a banquet in his honor, Bush noted that drug control was a matter of "personal interest" and that Pakistan's efforts were a source of the greatest satisfaction to him. Among the guests listening to his remarks that evening were a number of prominent individuals allegedly linked to the most lucrative heroin syndicates in the world.

At the time of his visit George Bush was chair of the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System, a nationwide network designed to stem the flow of drugs into the United States. By 1984, according to European police sources, Pakistan was furnishing 70 percent of the world supply of high-grade heroin. Five years earlier, when General Zia executed his elected predecessor, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, heroin was unknown in Pakistan. Today the country has an estimated 650,000 heroin addicts.

While Bush and Zia walked among the pines at Muree, another story was unfolding thousands of miles away in Norway. In an Oslo prison cell, a young Pakistani heroin smuggler named Raza Qureshi was giving police details about a syndicate. His story contained all the intrigue of a heroin trail as dramatic as *The French Connection*, and it would ultimately lead to the doorstep of Zia himself. Qureshi had been arrested in December 1983 at Oslo's Fornebu airport carrying 3.5 kilograms of heroin. In hopes of reducing his sentence, he began to cooperate with police.

In the summer of 1984, a quiet but determined Norwegian police officer, Oyvind Olsen, arrived here in the Pakistani capital to try to identify and break the syndicate behind Qureshi's Oslo operation. Back in Norway an equally persistent young journalist, Arild Jonassen of the daily *Aftenposten*, began to pursue what the Norwegian press came to call the "Pakistan League." For a year, Olsen kept up the pressure on Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (F.I.A.). Progress was slow until September 1985, when the Norwegian Public Prosecutor, Kristan Nicolaisen, made an official request to the F.I.A. for the arrest of three men, Tahir Butt, Munawar Hussain and Hamid Hasnain. The prosecutor identified the three as "standing behind the drug traffic from Pakistan to Norway." On October 27, F.I.A. teams made the arrests here and in Rawalpindi.

It was then that the first sparks began to fly. The officers who arrested Hasnain, a vice president of the state-owned Habib Bank, reportedly had found in his briefcase the personal bank records of President Zia ul-Haq. According to Pakistani sources, these included checkbooks and bank statements for the accounts of the President, his wife and his daughter. Hasnain threatened the arresting officers with dire consequences, and on the night of his arrest, according

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Lawrence Lifschultz was South Asia correspondent of the Far Eastern Economic Review, *and has covered the region for* The Guardian, *the BBC and* Le Monde Diplomatique. *He wishes to express special thanks to Imran Akbar of the Lahore daily* The Nation, *who courageously pursued the "Norwegian connection" until he had to flee Pakistan following threats to his life. He would also like to make special mention of Wasim Qazi, a young freelance journalist who was murdered in November 1987 in Lahore while investigating a story on the heroin trade.*

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Howard Fast published his first novel in 1933, and in the 55 years since has written 50 more works. His latest, **The Pledge** (Houghton Mifflin; 324 pages, $18.95) is a real triumph: a deeply moving, heartfelt autobiographical story that illuminates a dark part of American history. It is the tale of a man who, like Fast, was deserted by friends, blacklisted in his work, and thrown into jail during the shameful frenzy of the McCarthy era. Also like Fast, he survived with dignity and optimism through the love and support of his wife. From the enticing opening scene in Calcutta to the gut-wrenching ending, this is a powerful book a master storyteller has imbued with the inspiring spirit of his own life.

By Digby Diehl

Modern Maturity October–November 1988

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to several independent sources, senior officers of the F.I.A. received phone calls from the President's wife, Shafiqa Zia, who was traveling in Egypt, demanding to know why Hasnain had been detained.

Accounts of what happened next vary, but there is no dispute that top F.I.A. and police officials were summoned by General Zia to explain their arrests. Some sources report a stormy meeting, but by all accounts Zia was made to realize that the intense interest in the case on the part of the Norwegian government and press made the arrests unavoidable. A formal request from Norway's State Prosecutor could not be ignored.

Pakistani police sources describe Hamid Hasnain as virtually the adopted son of President and Mrs. Zia. Hasnain lived within walking distance of the President's house and enjoyed open security clearance for entering it. According to sources close to Hasnain, he had handled all private banking matters for Zia and members of his family for more than five years and had also managed the construction of a private residence for the President here. He also took care of the finances of a number of military figures in Zia's innermost circle. During his subsequent trial, Hasnain acknowledged to Norwegian journalist Tor Strand that "as bank chief of Habib Bank, I was responsible for the President's family's bank accounts."

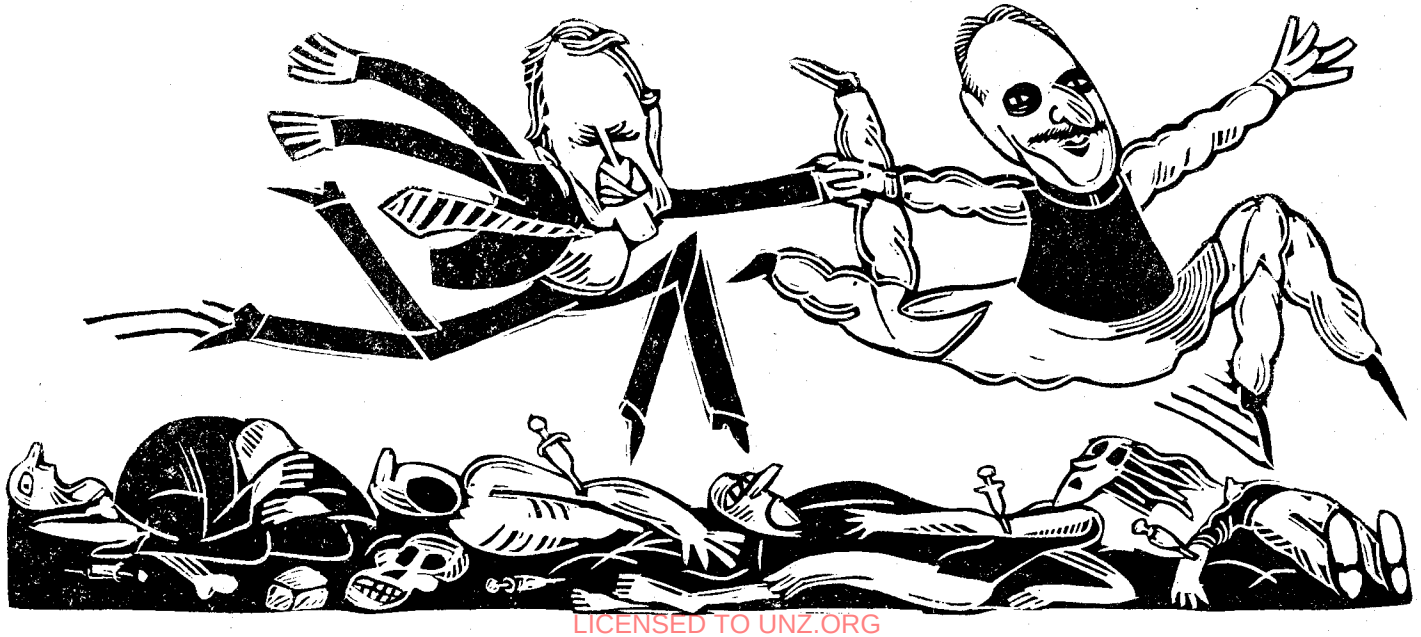
The case against Hasnain and his two co-defendants moved slowly, with Hasnain released on bail for "health reasons." Frustrated Norwegian authorities continued to press for a trial, and in June 1987 brought Raza Qureshi to Pakistan under police guard to testify as a material witness. As Qureshi took the stand to identify his collaborators, chaos erupted, with Butt, Hussain and Hasnain shouting threats against the witness's life. Norwegian journalists covering the trial described it as a "circus" and a "farce."

After three days of raucous hearings, Norwegian prosecutor Nicolaisen informed Pakistani authorities that his delegation intended to withdraw from the proceedings and file a formal diplomatic protest. Suddenly fearful of international repercussions, the Pakistanis promised Nicolaisen that the rest of the trial would follow the strictest legal procedures. Within two days, the presiding judge canceled bail for the defendants. They were handcuffed, the death threats against witnesses ceased and the Norwegians were able to present their evidence. The trial was rapidly concluded, and Hasnain, Butt and Hussain received heavy sentences.

Today Hamid Hasnain sits in Rawalpindi central jail, a bitter and angry man. The "adopted son" was disowned by his "father" because, once caught in the Norwegian affair, he posed a serious threat to General Zia. "In my personal and legal opinion, Hamid Hasnain is innocent," says Munir Bhatti, his lawyer. "He has been made a scapegoat. The investigation was not properly conducted. The biggest smugglers involved in this case have not been unearthed. The F.I.A. spoiled the case. The evidence was distorted. There was no justification in letting off the actual culprits, who include senior personalities in this country. There was evidence in the case identifying such people." According to Norwegian sources, the Oslo authorities did indeed provide Pakistan with a great many investigative leads. But these were never followed up.

The Hasnain case is not the only one in which leads have disappeared when they reach the higher levels of authority in Pakistan. In 1986 the BBC's program *Panorama* told the tale of a Japanese courier named Hisayoshi Maruyama who was arrested in Amsterdam in May 1983 carrying 17.5 kilos of high-grade heroin. (Maruyama also ran a bogus clinic, specializing in pediatrics, with the help of a counterfeit medical degree. His prize patient was General Zia's retarded youngest daughter. How this came about, BBC reporter Peter Taylor noted dryly, "has never been explained.") Maruyama identified the head of the syndicate for which he worked as a Lahore cinema owner named Mirza Iqbal Baig. When two BBC reporters went to interview Baig, a dozen thugs dragged them out of the office and beat them.

In 1986, the main daily newspaper here, *The Muslim*, quoted a customs intelligence agent's description of Baig as "the most active dope dealer in the country." A senior Pakistani narcotics officer, when asked why Baig had not



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been arrested, replied that the hands of the police were "tied" by higher authorities. Another police officer confirmed that Baig was a major target of U.S. and European narcotics agencies, and that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration had tried several ruses to lure Baig abroad in order to make an arrest. When asked why the D.E.A. had failed to secure an arrest inside the country, as the Norwegians had in the Hasnain case, the police officer said he had concluded that the United States was unwilling to press for arrests that might lead to embarrassing revelations at the highest levels of a government so closely allied with Washington.

Sayed Sami Ahmed, a lawyer with Karachi's High Court bar association, is more blunt. "We may have evidence against a particular individual," he says, "but still our law enforcing agencies cannot lay hands on such people, because they are being forbidden to act by their superiors or those persons for whom they are working. The real culprits have enough money and resources. Frankly, they are enjoying some sort of immunity."

The most serious allegations point to the existence of one or more major heroin syndicates within the Pakistan Army. The arrest of two military officers in 1986 sparked tension between the police services, which are charged with suppression of the narcotics trade, and a small but powerful element in the army. The first incident came in June of that year, when an army major was arrested while driving from Peshawar to Karachi with 220 kilos of heroin, the largest shipment ever intercepted in Pakistan. Exactly two months later, an identical amount was seized in the arrest of an air force lieutenant. Together, the two shipments of heroin could have had a street value of up to $4 billion—twice the covert U.S. budget for the Afghan war for the past eight years. Both the arrested officers were taken from police custody and detained, supposedly in high security, at an army facility outside Karachi. However, before any substantive investigation could be conducted, both men escaped under what Pakistan's *Defence Journal* generously termed "mystifying circumstances."

Allegations involving the Pakistan Army in the heroin traffic have moved closer and closer to the select cadre most intimately involved in "covert" support for the Afghan war. The local press, led by a courageous English-language monthly, *The Herald*, has reported on a number of occasions that the main conduit by which weapons reach the Afghan insurgents in the north is also one of the principal routes for the transport of heroin to Karachi for shipment to Europe and the United States. "It is really very simple," *The Herald* reported in January 1987. "If you control the poppy fields, Karachi and the road which links the two, you will be so rich that you will control Pakistan."

The Central Intelligence Agency's arms pipeline to the Afghan mujahedeen is organized and coordinated by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence. Under I.S.I. direction the weapons and supplies move north from Karachi to Peshawar and on to Afghanistan. The main carrier is an outfit called the National Logistic Cell. Owned by the Pakistan Army, it is the largest transport organization in the country. All its

INVITATION

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US IN HONORING THE MEMORY OF ABE ISSERMAN, GOOD FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE, WHO DIED ON APRIL 22, 1988 AT THE AGE OF 87. THE GATHERING WILL BE HELD AT LOCAL 1199, MARTIN LUTHER KING CENTER, 310 W. 43 STREET, NEW YORK, NY, IN THE WALTER REUTHER HALL, SECOND FLOOR, ON NOVEMBER 17, 1988 AT 7:00 PM

CONGRESSMAN GEORGE CROCKETT
WILL BE THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER.

Since admission to the Bar in 1923, Abe's life was dedicated to defending the rights of labor and racial and political minorities. He was a prominent labor and civil rights attorney in New Jersey for more than two decades, beginning with the Patterson silk strike of 1926. He was attorney for the NJ State Federation of Labor, a number of labor union councils, and unions across the country. His association with the Newspaper Guild was particularly close.

Abe Isserman was also attorney for the ACLU and the Consumers Union. A member of the ACLU National Board from 1935 to 1939, he resigned in 1939 in protest at the expulsion of a founding member, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. He also represented the Jehovah Witnesses in their fight against compulsory allegiance to the American Flag, later upheld by the Supreme Court.

In 1949, at the outset of the Cold War witchhunt, he joined with four other attorneys in representing the defendants in the major Smith Act trial (the *Dennis* case). For their staunch defense of the defendants' constitutional rights, Judge Medina punished the lawyers, too, with prison terms. Upon his release, Abe was disbarred from practicing law for 13 years. During that period he had the doubious honor of being the first and only attorney in US history whose right to appear before a court was limited to only one, the US Supreme Court.

Abe exemplified the best traditions of the people's lawyer. For that we gather to honor his memory. Congressman Crockett, the keynote speaker, worked with Abe Isserman and was a member of the legal team in the *Dennis* case.

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drivers and loaders are army personnel; security at N.L.C. installations is tight. N.L.C. trucks allegedly have been repeatedly used in the shipment of heroin from the North West Frontier Province to the port of Karachi. In its September 1985 issue, *The Herald* gave this eyewitness report: "The drug is carried in N.L.C. trucks, which come sealed from N.W.F.P. and are never checked by the police. They come down from Peshawar to Pipri, Jungshahi, Jhimpir where they deliver their cargo, sacks of grain, to government godowns. Some of these sacks contain packets of heroin. . . . This has been going on now for about three and a half years."

Similar accusations were made last January by the Provincial Minister for Excise in Sindh province, Murad Ali Shah, who controls Karachi customs. The minister demanded that police be given the authority to search vehicles—particularly those operating under N.L.C. authority—for narcotics. But according to police sources, the National Logistic Cell remains strictly out of bounds. "If we want to investigate the N.L.C. or military personnel who we believe may be involved in the narcotics trade, we are told to keep out by the Army," says one senior police official. "If you push too hard, you will be transferred."

The military man most frequently cited by European police as having fostered an environment in which the heroin trade could flourish is General Zia's most trusted confidant, Lieut. Gen. Fazle Huq, Chief Minister and former Governor of the North West Frontier Province. Huq's critics refer to him as "our own Noriega," and argue that the United States has ignored his other activities because of the crucial and effective role he played as Governor of the province that served as the main staging area for Afghan mujahedeen operations. As early as 1982, Huq had been implicated in narcotics reports reaching Interpol in Paris. However, Pakistani and European police officials interviewed for this article allege that any serious inquiry into the operations of major heroin syndicates in the North West Frontier Province has been aborted at the highest level.

General Huq denounces the "gutter press" for these allegations. "Would the United States have tolerated for eight years a governor involved in drug trafficking?" he asked in a recent interview. That is certainly an appropriate question. The United States currently has a staff of seventeen officers in Pakistan who work exclusively on narcotics matters—twice the force of all other Western embassies combined. The Drug Enforcement Administration in Pakistan includes several officers from the C.I.A., which has been engaged in collecting overseas narcotics intelligence since 1975. European police who have worked closely with the D.E.A. claim that U.S. agents have identified nearly forty significant narcotics syndicates in Pakistan. Yet in the past ten years not one single major syndicate has been broken up as a result of U.S. enforcement efforts. The only major network exposed in the last decade has been the Norwegian connection.

"It is very strange that the Americans, with the size of their staff, the scale of their resources, and the political power they possess in Pakistan, have failed to break a single narcotics case," says one European police officer, a five-year veteran of Pakistan's heroin wars. "The explanation cannot be found in a lack of adequate police work. They have had some excellent men working in Pakistan." Scrutiny of unsanitized D.E.A. reports indeed reveals a highly professional team interested in facts, not propaganda. (D.E.A. officials in Pakistan declined to be interviewed for this article.)

Why then has narcotics intelligence been so poorly utilized? The explanation may lie in the conflicting agendas of U.S. policy in Pakistan. The Reagan Administration's overriding goal has been to buttress a government that aligned itself with U.S. strategic objectives in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf. At the time of President Zia's death in a plane crash in August, his regime was, as *The New York Times* noted, "the strongest pro-American force in the region." Exposing the involvement of senior figures in this pro-American force, especially if they had an important role in the Afghan war, would have caused conflicts that lesser powers, such as Norway, do not experience.

The United States has been down this road before. Washington's tendency to turn a blind eye to narcotics trafficking when it perceives "national security" to be at stake is what the Noriega scandal was all about. It was also the subject of Alfred McCoy's classic study, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*. "Practicing a ruthless form of clandestine realpolitik," McCoy wrote, "[C.I.A.] agents made alliances with any local group willing and able to stem the flow of 'Communist aggression.' . . . American diplomats and secret agents have been involved in the narcotics trade at three levels: coincidental complicity by allying with groups actively engaged in the drug traffic; abetting the traffic by covering up for known heroin traffickers and condoning their involvement; and active engagement in the transport of opium and heroin. It is ironic, to say the least, that America's heroin plague is of its own making."

"I want a drug-free America," Bush told the Republicans in his acceptance speech. "Tonight, I challenge the young people of our country to shut down the drug dealers around the world. . . . My Administration will be telling the dealers, 'Whatever we have to do, we'll do, but your day is over. You're history.'" In fact, when he visited Islamabad in May 1984, George Bush, Vice President of the United States and chairman of the National Narcotics Border Interdiction Service, was sending precisely the opposite message to the men who were the guardians of Pakistan's heroin kingdom. □

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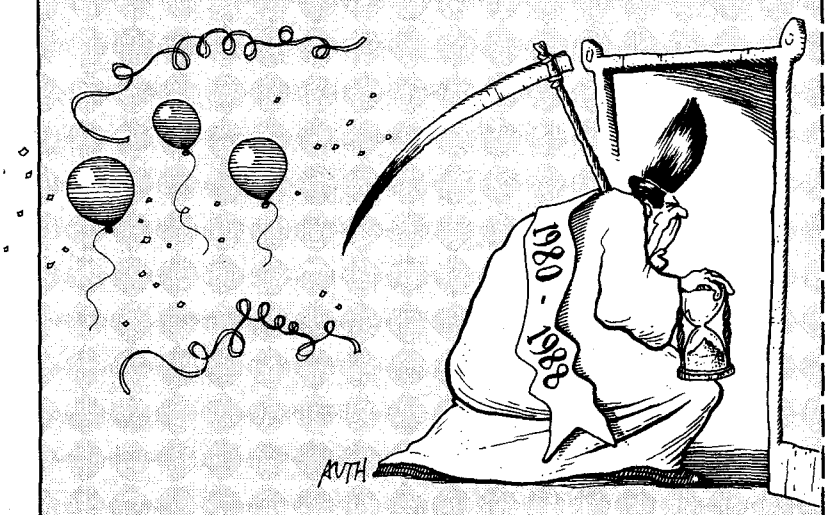

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Primal Hooting

THOMAS M. DISCH

TRANSFORMATION: The Breakthrough. *By Whitley Strieber. William Morrow. 256 pp. $18.95.*

Whitley is back! Those who treasure the more exotic forms of untruth will need no further prompting. *Communion*, Whitley Strieber's 1987 account of his abduction by aliens, was a primal hoot. Its sequel, *Transformation*, recycles the same whoppers with only minor variations, but it offers generous portions of the same shameless charlatanry and page after page of Whitley's patented prose with its peanut-butter-and-jelly mix of penny-dreadful horror and saccharine sanctimony. Here's a taste of the peanut butter:

> Andrew [his 7-year-old son and co-abductee] started screaming. The shock that went through me this time was absolutely explosive. . . . His screaming filled my ears, my soul. Listening to it, I wanted to die. . . . I thought I was going to suffocate. My throat was closed, my eyes were swimming with tears. The sense of being *injured* was powerful and awful. It was as if the whole house were full of filthy, stinking insects the size of tigers.

And here's the jelly:

> The visitors are sweeping up from where we buried them under layers of denial and false assurance to deliver what is truly a message from the beyond. . . . They have caused me to slough off my old view of the world like the dismal skin that it was and seek a completely new vision of this magnificent, mysterious, and fiercely alive universe.

U.F.O. stories are generally not accorded serious media attention, but Strieber was a special case. He had already published best-selling horror novels that had gone on to become movies. Here was a bankable Name Writer willing to go on record as a U.F.O. abductee. "It's rather doubtful that a non-writer could spark the kind of enthusiasm that you find in this book," his editor at Morrow, James Landis, confided in the August 14, 1987, *Publisher's Weekly*. Whitley got a million-dollar advance for *Communion*. Morrow and Avon aren't ballyhooing what they're paying for the sequel, for such publicity might confirm doubts among those inclined to believe that Whitley's motivation is mercenary rather than his declared desire to seek a completely new vision of our mysterious universe. Surely it is hard to account for Whitley's and his publisher's conduct on any other basis. Read as a factual account of alien contact, *Communion* and *Transformation* have the verisimilitude of a Paul Bunyan legend. Taken as a strategy for commercial and psychological self-aggrandizement, however, they make perfect sense.

Consider only the internal chronology and publishing history of the two books. *Communion* tells of Whitley's encounters with the aliens on October 4 and December 26, 1985, events the aliens had made him forget until the memories were retrieved via hypnosis in March of 1986. Between March and the fall of that year, Whitley must have made and sold the book proposal and written the book, which appeared in bookstores promptly in January 1987. Meanwhile, on April 2, 1986, Whitley now reports in *Transformation*, his 7-year-old son, Andrew, underwent his own U.F.O. abduction, which was the source of the paternal anguish quoted above. Readers of *Transformation* won't learn much about little Andrew's sufferings at the hands of the aliens, since Whitley is extremely respectful of his son's privacy in this matter. For the inside story on that one, we'll probably have to wait another couple of years until Andrew is old enough to appear on talk shows to sell his own searing account. Does it not seem strange that Whitley would not have mentioned these latest tricks his aliens were up to in the book he was then writing? This is a question not addressed in *Transformation*, but I can hypothesize two answers: (1) Andrew's abduction was held in reserve for *Transformation* because of its can-you-top-this, sequel-making value; or (2) Whitley did not want to expose his boy to the merciless scrutiny of the press at *that* time, but then, coming to realize the awesome significance of his revelations, decided that he would sacrifice these paternal scruples in the interest of the Truth.

Transformation differs from *Communion* in several significant ways. Whitley no longer accesses his abduction memories via hypnosis. Indeed, he is now critical of the practice and of his fellow U.F.O. expert Budd Hopkins, whose competing and more lurid account of abduction—and rape—by aliens, *Intruders* (Random House, no less), appeared in bookstores shortly after *Communion*. "I feel," Whitley warns, "that the present fad of hypnotizing 'abductees,' which is being engaged in by untrained investigators, will inevitably lead to suffering, breakdown, and possibly even suicide." Hopkins's book reported that women were being impregnated by aliens, returned to Earth, and then reabducted for the harvesting of the fetuses, and while Whitley wisely refrains from questioning the literal truth of such claims, he does take Hopkins to task for his view of the aliens as a destructive force:

> I cannot agree with this. Certainly it is clear that our response to an encounter is often one of fear and terror. Our perceptions are distorted by panic at the high level of strangeness we observe.
>
> But it is premature to assume that our experiences are actually negative in content.

Whitley is now promoting an upbeat U.F.O. abduction experience. Fear is to be a key that opens up a cosmic funhouse:

> We must learn to walk the razor's edge between fear and ecstasy. . . . [The visitors] made me face death, face them, face my weaknesses and my buried terrors. At the same time, they kept demonstrating to me that I was more than a body, and even that my body could enter extraordinary states such as physical levitation.

In *Communion* Whitley had solicited readers to come to the front of the church and testify about *their* U.F.O. experiences, an invitation that yielded a brief fad of abductee support groups. In *Transformation* Whitley extends a more enticing possibility, a form of transcendence that doesn't depend on the whims of aliens, who are notoriously undependable, never appearing when they're invited. How about out-of-body travel? It's safe, it's cheap and it's semi-reliable, if, like Whitley, one uses the methods developed at the Monroe Institute in West Virginia, where Whitley went to learn methods for entering a "mind awake/body asleep" state that allows the wakeful sleeper to shuffle off this mortal coil and visit friends in a discorporate but not imperceptible condi-

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tion. Two people Whitley tried to contact in this way didn't receive his vibrations, but then, in February of 1987, Eureka!

> A friend in Denver called me to report an odd experience. She had awakened and seen the outline of my face across the room from her. Later she wrote me, "What I saw exactly was the impression of your face wearing the glasses you wear amid the leaves of a plant hanging near the door of my bedroom for about three seconds in the dark. I turned on the light and nothing was there."
>
> . . .
>
> I probably would not have mentioned the incident had it not kept happening.
>
> Chicago radio personality Roy Leonard . . . awakened on the night of June 7, 1987, to find my presence in his bedroom. He reported that he could "almost" see me.
>
> . . .
>
> That night I had an extremely strange dream of moving like a ghost through an endless, dark woods and entering a little room that was so dark I couldn't see a thing. How Roy Leonard ended up on the receiving end of that dream I do not presently understand.

What Whitley's out-of-body capabilities have to do with his U.F.O. experiences is never precisely spelled out, but it makes good sense intuitively. To paraphrase Judy Garland, "If U.F.O.s fly beyond the rainbow, why, then, oh why can't I?" In any case, there is no need to speculate about Whitley's intentions and supernal powers, for I have been able to discuss all these matters in confidence with Whitley's disembodied spirit! Only last night—October 13, 1988—Whitley's ectoplasmic, night-wandering self visited me in my bedroom, and this time it was no mere three-second, now-you-see-him-now-you-don't fugitive vision. His pale, tormented visage hung around for several minutes, and though I lacked the presence of mind to tape-record our dialogue, you can take my word for it that what follows is substantially what Whitley confided to me. Whitley himself may not recall our conversation, just as he seems to have forgotten his visit to Roy Leonard; he may even deny that it took place, but I am entirely persuaded it was Whitley I spoke to and no one else, though a skeptical friend has suggested to me that what I perceived as Whitley was only a product of my own overheated imagination. Or then again, it may be, as Hamlet surmised:

> The spirit that I have seen
> May be a devil: and the devil hath power
> To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy—
> As he is very potent with such spirits—
> Abuses me to damn me.

I had just laid aside the volume of Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* with which I had been beguiling the sleepless hours when I began to feel a curious sensation, not unlike one recounted by Whitley: "It felt as if I had come unstuck from myself. The experience was strange in the extreme—almost beyond description." At the same time I heard an unearthly mewling sound that seemed to come from outside the window screen. It was inconceivable that a cat could have made its way to my window ledge, eleven stories above ground level, for there is no fire escape, and yet I could distinctly see a dark shape on the ledge—a shape that, even as I watched, dumb with horror, proceeded to drift through the screen and to hover above a spider plant in the far corner of the room. Slowly the dark cloud coalesced into the mirthless face I had seen on so many television talk shows.

"Whitley!" I gasped. "Is it possible?"

His face trembled as though molded of colorless Jell-O and solidified into a sneer. "Of course not. You must be one of those fantasy-prone personalities I've read about. You must be having a hypnopompic hallucination."

Whitley was undoubtedly referring to Robert A. Baker's discussion of *Communion*, which had appeared in the Winter 1987-88 issue of *The Skeptical Inquirer*, a journal put out by CSI-COP, the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, an organization devoted to the thankless task of debunking all the varieties of supernatural and pseudoscientific fraud. According to Baker, Whitley's U.F.O. stories are textbook cases of hypnopompic hallucination,

> complete with the awakening from a sound sleep, the strong sense of reality and of being awake, the paralysis (due to the fact that the body's neural circuits keep our muscles relaxed and help preserve our sleep), and the encounter with strange beings. Following the encounter, instead of jumping out of bed and going in search of the strangers he has seen, Strieber typically goes back to sleep. [All these patterns are repeated in *Transformation*.—T.D.] . . . Strieber, of course, is convinced of the reality of these experiences. This too is expected. If he was not . . . then the experiences would not

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be hypnopompic or hallucinatory.

Until this moment I had been skeptical about Baker's theory, which seems designed to give Whitley and other self-styled abductees the benefit of the doubt with regard to their good faith. The internal evidence of *Communion* suggests to me that even if Whitley's aliens had their origins in his waking dreams, they have long since been assimilated into a wholly conscious hoax. Whitley can bring passionate conviction to the defense of his lies; he even boasts of how he breezes through lie detector tests (while enjoining "'debunkers' intent on twisting the facts" from contacting his front man, Dr. John Gleidman). But liars characteristically evidence a passionate commitment to their lies. Witness such recent bearers of false witness as Oliver North, Kurt Waldheim, President Reagan and Jim and Tammy Bakker. The list could be continued for many column inches. The 1980s are the Age of Isuzu. Lying has become a form of entertainment. Surely a large part of Whitley's readership approaches his books in a spirit of connoisseurship rather than credulity, relishing the spectacle of his effrontery as one might the penitential tears of Jimmy Swaggart.

But there is no need for *me* to frame an indictment against Whitley. He did so himself with unforgettable (and uncharacteristic) eloquence on the night of October 13.

"Must you come visiting me in my dreams?" I grumbled at the phantasm of Whitley. "Why can't we just declare a truce?"

"You started this, Disch," it hissed. "No other *respectable* writer thought it worth his while to attack a book about U.F.O.s. There's a gentleman's agreement in the book trade that crackpot ideas are not discussed in highbrow journals."

"Right. Only on *The Tonight Show*, and then only if there's no one there to contradict you."

The disembodied head nodded. "Exactly. I am in the business of founding a new faith, and faiths are, by definition, beyond criticism. It's quite simple, really. In a world of systemic corruption, we must all look the other way. If every Watergate conspirator had had the reticence and decency of G. Gordon Liddy, children might still have some respect for constituted authority."

"Oh, Liddy had great team spirit, I'll give you that. The thing is, Whitley, *I'm* not on *your* team."

"That makes no difference when religion is at issue. Meeting a Mormon socially, you would not cross-examine him about his honest opinion of the revelations Joseph Smith received from the Angel Moroni. And I claim the same exemption from criticism. As I see it, there's not much difference between the books I've written and the synoptic Gospels. Like the witnesses of the Resurrection and the other miracles reported in the Gospels, all I am saying is that *I saw what I saw.* Impeach my honesty and that of those who have colluded in one or another of my fancies, and you impeach the honesty of all true believers, and so my first priority is to take the moral high ground, along with the author of Proverbs, who wrote, 'Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware.' Or, a verse I like even better, 'Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the backs of fools.'"

This had the ring of the Whitley whose first, fictional exploration of ufology, a short story called "Pain," had taken the form of soft-core S&M porn; the Whitley who witnesses, in *Transformation*, the following cautionary tableau:

> a stone floor with a low stone table in the middle of it. The table was a bit more than waist high, and on it there was a set of iron shackles. A man was led down some steps and attached to these shackles. He was right in front of my face, not two feet from me, looking directly at me with eyes so sad that I almost couldn't bear it. . . . Behind him was a taller person wearing black. . . . The next thing I knew this person was beating the poor man with a terrible whip. Before my eyes this man was being almost torn to pieces by the fury of the beating. . . . Somebody behind me said, "He failed to get you to obey him and now he must bear the consequences."

"There's one thing I still don't understand," I confided to Whitley's head. "I can see *your* incentive to pile it on. You earn a fortune, and it makes you a kind of celebrity, and there must even be a kind of high-wire thrill to see how far you can go with it. But what's in it for the other Johnny-come-lately abductees? They won't have best sellers or movie sales; they won't be interviewed by talk show hosts."

"Ah, but as Jesus said at some point, every little bit counts. Bruce Lee, for instance. His testimony wasn't required of him. He isn't even my editor at Morrow. He simply saw there was an opportunity to do something for his employer, and for me, and pitched in. Talk about team players!"

Whitley was referring to one of the drollest tales in his book, concerning the night that Bruce Lee, a senior editor at Morrow, visited a bookstore on Manhattan's Upper East Side on an evening in January 1987 and witnessed two aliens in winter coats, their faces muffled with scarves. The aliens were paging through the newly released *Communion*, "turning—and apparently speed-reading—the pages at a remarkable rate." Mr. Lee noticed that "behind their dark glasses both the man and the woman had large, black, almond-shaped eyes." Lee, a former reporter and correspondent for *Newsweek* and *Reader's Digest*, "felt decidedly uneasy, deeply shocked." Later, Lee would take a lie detector test administered by Whitley's own polygraphist, Nat Laurendi, and when asked if he thought the beings he saw in the bookstore were aliens—or, as Whitley prefers, "visitors"—Lee replied yes. Then: "He was asked if I had offered him anything of value to tell his story. He answered 'no' and this answer was evaluated as true."

"Yes," Whitley went on, "Bruce is a

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peach. But really, *everyone* at Morrow has been wonderful. Sherry Arden, who is the president and publisher, has been quoted in *Publisher's Weekly* as saying, 'We truly believe this happened to Whitley.' And Rena Wolner at Avon called me 'one of the most creative people I know.' And then there's Phillipe Mora, who'll be directing the movie of *Communion*: *He* came out to the cottage and met one of the aliens . . . Oops, excuse me, *visitors*, right there where it all began."

"But none of them are exactly disinterested witnesses, are they? I'm surprised that everyone at Morrow isn't required to declare their belief in U.F.O.s as a condition of continued employment. The people I can't understand are the people who imitate you for no obvious mercenary reason."

"Every abductee, within the smaller public sphere of his or her own social circle, is a mini-celebrity, a person important enough to have been taken up into the high-tech heaven of a genuine flying saucer. That should be inducement enough for *millions* of people—once I've got this thing rolling."

"Even though everyone knows they're bull-shitting?"

"And who isn't these days? Why should the right to lie and be respected for one's lies be reserved for televangelists and the highest officials of our government? Indeed, in that regard the situation nowadays is strikingly close to that of the Roman Empire in the early Christian era, when the Emperors were officially divine. Caligula claimed to have enjoyed sexual congress with the moon-goddess in a manner not unlike my own spicier moments aboard the U.F.O.s. What could have been more personally satisfying for an ordinary Roman citizen, confronted with such poppycock, than to declare an equivalent demi-divinity?—if not Godhead, at least co-immortality with the crucified and resurrected God. So much for the divine pretensions of Caligula, or Pat Robertson, or Nero, or Nixon, or Heliogabalus."

"Whitley, are you trying to suggest that your potboilers are on a par with the Gospels?"

Whitley smiled a sly smile. "Did I say that? No, no, you're putting words in my mouth."

Before I could ask him any more questions, Whitley laid a pseudopod aside of his nose, and, with a wink, he disappeared. But I fully expect he will return, in a year or so, with new spiritual revelations from his hand-puppet aliens. □

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The Small Time

STUART KLAWANS

So many good books have been coming out of Houston's Arte Publico Press that I lately realized I couldn't read them all. In one month alone, three more appeared in the mailbox, all of them praiseworthy (see below). This had to stop. So, intending to surrender, I phoned the director of Arte Publico, Nicolás Kanellos, only to learn that he had already shown me mercy. He'd been sending no more than half of what he publishes.

Kanellos, Puerto Rican by background and a New Yorker by birth, has built up Arte Publico from a literary magazine he founded in 1972. Originally called *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*, the magazine has since changed its name to *The Americas Review*, without altering its purpose. "We publish Hispanic writing from all of the traditions that are present in the United States—Puerto Rican, Mexican, Cuban, whatever," Kanellos says. "We try to bring Hispanic writers together. And we publish them mainly in English, to show they're part of the fabric of North American culture and always have been."

In 1979, Kanellos inaugurated Arte Publico Press by publishing his first book: *La Carreta Made a U-Turn*, by the New York City–based Puerto Rican poet Tato Laviera. A year later, Arte Publico became associated with the University of Houston, where Kanellos is currently a professor of Hispanic and classical languages. At present, Arte Publico publishes some twenty books a year. It maintains a backlist of 125 titles—a remarkable feat for a small press—and recently sold film options on two of its books.

Of the recent titles, the one that impresses me most is *Rainbow's End*, a novel by Genaro González. Perhaps some quick-thinking movie executive will make this the third Arte Publico book to be optioned. It would be worth the money, if only for the character of Don Heraclio Cavazos, who first appears on U.S. soil—actually, U.S. mud—after having swum the Rio Grande at high flood. In his youth, Don Heraclio lives in Doña Zoila's rooming house for migrant workers, sharing his days with men called the Elephant, the Tomcat, the Frog Prince, the Love Bandit and El Bruto. In his maturity, as a widower with two children, he serves as a father figure for a large part of his barrio. In old age, full of stubbornness and defiance, he becomes a kind of Zapatista codger. He discomfits the more respectable members of his family by proudly embodying a past of poverty and radicalism; he mortifies the more quiescent of his neighbors by habitually remarking, in reply to most pleasantries, "They shot Kennedy."

But Don Heraclio, although the dominant character in the novel, is not the only one who would be worth a producer's money. His son Lalo is a petty gangster; his daughter and son-in-law are sad but understandable adherents of the mall culture. One grandson goes to Vietnam and returns a spiritual cripple; the other journeys to Mexico and discovers something of Don Heraclio's conviction. The novel's summing-up belongs to none of them, though, but to Fela, the sorceress who is Don Heraclio's sister-in-law. She is a character who rarely occupies the center of attention but stays in the reader's peripheral vision throughout the book. Like Don Heraclio, she has suffered for her uprightness and pride. Unlike him, she is without a family of her own; no one, except Fela herself, even knows she has been in love. She, too, passes on her strength and conviction at the end, although in this case the recipient is a young girl who wants to be her apprentice in sorcery. We aren't told the girl's name; it's doubtful that Fela herself knows it.

So much for what a movie producer could buy. What can't be transferred to film is González's writing, which at its best deals in epiphanies. Some of his narrative set pieces are very fine—he's particularly lively in recounting the delicious excitement that runs through the barrio when a young girl claims to have met the devil at a Saturday night dance. But the scene that has stayed with me is one that happens almost entirely in Don Heraclio's mind. Grieving over the deaths of his wife and his oldest friend, he has been living in a monochromatic world, "where passion played no part, but neither did pain." At last he returns to work, and there, standing in the tomato fields, he gets a nosebleed. He tilts back his head, and in that instant he thinks he sees his wife, in one of her green work shirts, and his friend, dressed in yellow. Is he hallucinating? Has Fela somehow brought them back? The nosebleed keeps him from lowering his head to look. While his eyes are fixed on the sky, storm clouds are gathering. Suddenly, there is a rumble. "Someone yelled, 'Here it comes!' and dust began hissing round like matches extinguished in water." As the rain pours down, he hears his daughter Imelda shout to him to take cover. He lowers his head, "afraid that reality might plunge him back into his grim, ashen world." Then comes the revelation:

> Imelda began running toward him, and suddenly sporadic patches of the world caught color all around. A pair of dungy objects in a nearby field combusted into twin calico cows with huge, rust freckles, grazing without a care on the good, green earth. Even the fire ants under his feet seemed to ignite in redness.

And on the back of another friend, El Bruto, he sees a "yellow, hand-me-down shirt welcoming him back into the vital present." When González writes at this level, the creatures of his imagination combust into their own living, full-color reality.

Hugo Martinez-Serros, author of *The Last Laugh and Other Stories*, has produced an equally compelling book, but one that *always* seems gray. The setting is Martinez-Serros's native South Chicago, near the steel mills. The period is the 1930s and 1940s; the characters, for the most part, are Mexican-American children growing up in the shadows of taverns and railroad viaducts. Out of this material, Martinez-Serros makes brief, highly charged dramas, narrated with stoical reserve, which add up to a family portrait.

His is a family ruled by hard labor. The father works three days a week in the mills, spends all day Saturday picking food out of the city dump and during half the year farms a plot of land he's found on Torrence Avenue. His sons, when not suffering the insults of Anglo schoolteachers, work like slaves on the farm plot during the warm months and during the winter tend the big coal furnace for their building. (It is a condition of the family's rent that they keep the furnace going.) The young boy who serves as Martinez-Serros's surrogate earns money on his own, first selling newspapers and then sweeping up at a barbershop. This leads him to one of his first and most bitter lessons: His mother begins to borrow money from him in order to feed the family. Then, to their mutual horror, they realize she cannot pay him back. She is in debt to a 9-year-old boy.

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With *The Brick People*, by Alejandro Morales, we come to a much less personal fiction: a historical novel that reviews the growth of California over the past hundred years, as seen from a Mexican-American perspective. Morales borrows a formula that has served commercial novelists from Fannie Hurst to James Michener: He compares and contrasts the fortunes of two families over the generations. In this case, the families are Anglos (who own a brick factory in the city) and Chicanos (who work for the Anglos). On the whole, these characters are somewhat more lifelike than Michener's but less luridly engaging than Hurst's; which is to say, they are not so much characters as conveyances for information. High-minded readers will usually resist such thinly contrived fictions. But then, a lot depends on whether you want to learn the information being offered. *The Brick People* contained more than enough historical revelations to keep me happily low-minded and to overcome the stiffness of Morales's prose. (This is his first novel in English.) I cannot recommend the book wholeheartedly, but I think it will engross almost anyone with a curiosity about northern Mexico, southern California and their history.

What's coming up at Arte Publico? Kanellos mentions a forthcoming group of books by Hispanic women writers, many of whom have already been published successfully by the press. There will be new essays by Sandra Cisneros, and novels by Denise Chavez and Helena Maria Viramontes, whose previous books, respectively, were *The House on Mango Street*, *The Last of the Menu Girls* and *The Moths*. Kanellos seems particularly enthusiastic about a new novel by Lucha Corpi, *Delia's Song*, which he describes as a feminist love story set in Berkeley during the 1960s. Although the political background is important, he says, it is not central to the novel. "This is one of the first real love stories we've published."

Arte Publico does a large direct-mail business. A free catalogue is available from the press, care of the University of Houston, 4800 Calhoun, 429AH, Houston, TX 77004. *Rainbow's End* and *The Last Laugh and Other Stories* both have list prices of $8.50; *The Brick People* is $9.50. All are paperbacks.

To continue the theme: The latest issue of *The Portable Lower East Side* (Volume 5, Numbers 1 and 2) is devoted to Latin Americans in New York City. There are some well-known writers—

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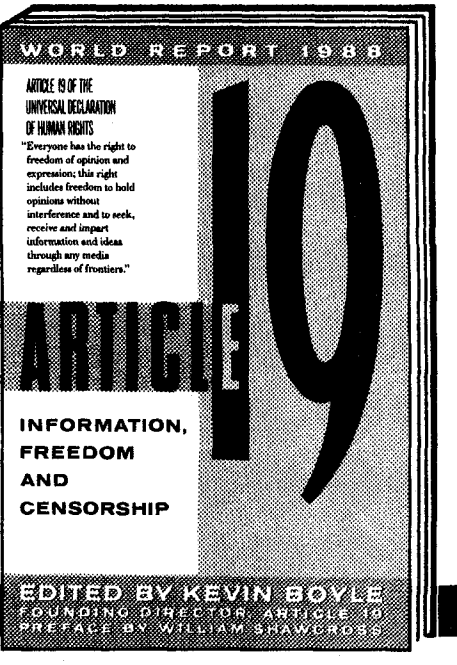
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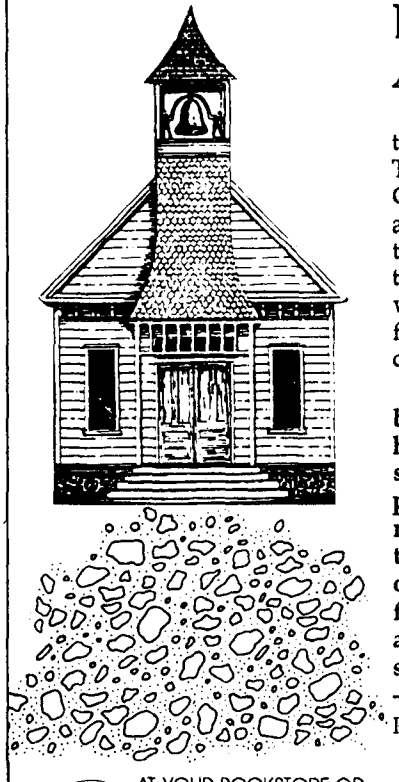

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Luisa Valenzuela is represented, with an excerpt from an untranslated novel, and Eduardo Galeano, with fragments of *The Century of the Wind*, the third volume of his *Memory of Fire*. My favorite piece, though, is an autobiographical sketch by the *salsero* Willie Colón, who boasts, "I have played most of the big cities of Western Europe, the Amazon jungle, where the audience literally arrived in dugout canoes, and, if this isn't contrast for you, I performed for President Reagan's (barf) 50th Presidential Inaugural Ball in Washington, where the audience was a lot rougher than the guys in the canoes" ($6, c/o 463 West Street, #344, New York, NY 10014).

West End Press has published an anthology of *Nicaraguan Peasant Poetry From Solentiname*, translated and introduced by David Gullette. You may recall that Ernesto Cardenal spent many years on the largest island of the Solentiname archipelago in Lake Nicaragua, serving as the local priest and running workshops in the area. A Venezuelan writer, Mayra Jimenez, assisted with the poetry workshops; the present book is a bilingual version of the anthology she published in Managua in 1980. Now, Adrienne Rich has confessed that she doesn't quite understand why she's expected to applaud the assertion, "In Nicaragua, everyone's a poet." On one level, it puzzles me, too. But I think it would be pointless, if not insulting, to read these texts simply as literature. They are documents of a revolutionary war, passed on to us by people who otherwise would have remained mute and unknown. When, on occasion, one of them displays poetic merit, that's a bonus. These writings bear witness, which is enough ($11.95, P.O. Box 27334, Albuquerque, NM 87125).

To depart from the theme: James Haining of Salt Lick Press has brought out his latest production, titled *A Child's Garden*. The silhouette illustrations, by Alice and Martin Provenson, come from an old edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*, with hand coloring added by Haining. The poems, too, come by way of Stevenson, though Haining has altered them into rather quizzical artifacts. For example:

> The world so
> full number
> were the happy
> as kings.

The result is like an elegant toy, typeset, printed and bound with the care that is standard at Salt Lick ($6, c/o 1804 E. 38½ Street, Austin, TX 78722).

Though it may seem curious to do so, I want to draw your attention to a collection of news stories published in 1986. They're as fresh now as they were then, for the simple reason that the mainstream press didn't report them. *The Alternative Press Annual, 1986* brings together articles under six headings: Planning for Nicaragua's Future; Who's Terrorizing Whom?; Government-Sponsored Nightmares; The Cost of Living; Actions and Reactions; and Art, Spirituality and Social Change. That should give you the tone. With the exception of the arts section, which I found woeful, the selections have been well chosen by Patricia J. Case, working with the help of librarians, scholars, activists and alternative press people. *The Alternative Press Annual* is available only in hardcover, at the rather steep price of $39.95. The publisher is selling a discounted four-volume set, covering the years 1983 through 1986, for $80 (Temple University Press, Broad and Oxford Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19122).

Although people in the small press may imagine them otherwise, editors at the big houses are human and at times even humane. Some, in fact, are sympathetic to the small press—which is to say, to literature rather than publishing. It's a small group, granted; but it has the honor of having included Tim McGinnis.

Tim's jobs—his official ones—were at Doubleday, McGraw-Hill, Rolling Stone and Simon & Schuster. Among his unofficial duties was the encouragement of writers everywhere. Tim could handle the businesslike aspects of publishing, but his attitude was always blessedly unprofessional. Basically, he thought being an editor was a great excuse for talking over the phone with Ted Williams and having lunch with people who knew absolutely everything about Delta blues. His deeper commitments were to his writing (which was published, though much too rarely, in *The Nation*, *The New Yorker*, *Premiere* and *Iowa Review*) and to anybody he judged to be innovative and funny. Perhaps his greatest coup as an editor came when he talked McGraw-Hill into publishing the collected rants of the SubGenius cult, thereby disseminating a large body of home-grown lunacy while turning a profit for his incredulous employers.

Tim's enthusiasms have figured frequently in "The Small Time." He himself

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has turned up, suitably incognito, as an informant on big-time publishing. Now he makes his last appearance in this column. Tim died in early July after a long fight against cancer. Everyone who cares about the true mission of publishing, big time or small, will miss him terribly. □

MUSIC.

EDWARD W. SAID

Giulio Cesare

Of all the great Western classical composers Georg Friedrich Handel has been the most consistently misrepresented and generally underestimated. An exact contemporary of J.S. Bach, Handel has routinely suffered in comparison with him. I recall frequent discussions with a musicologist friend who used Bach's elevated polyphonic style, his apparent intellectualism and severity, his affecting religiosity, to denigrate Handel's less "complex" style and his irrepressible, thumping floridity. Certainly one senses in Handel's music a certain worldliness and even courtliness of a sort not likely to engage contemporary audiences. But taken on his own, extraordinarily complex terms, Handel is certainly Bach's equal in technique and finish. Moreover, Handel's eighteenth-century colleagues all commented on his religious devotion, which rivaled Bach's, and although the aesthetic of his dramatic oratorios—*Israelites in Egypt*, *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabeus*, etc.—is brashly theatrical and realistic, there is no gainsaying the authentic splendors and unending inventiveness of his work.

There are, however, two problems with Handel that keep him from being as appreciated today as he has been by other great composers (remember, for example, how on his deathbed Beethoven spent hours leafing through Handel scores, venerating him above all his redoubtable predecessors). One problem is that Handel's major achievement was as an operatic composer in an admittedly constrained and specialized form, the *opera seria*. During the fifty years (1710 to 1759, the year of his death) he spent in England, Handel composed about thirty operas, produced and directed most of them and was almost until the end of his life a working man of the theater. Virtually none of this material is included in the modern operatic repertory, which has avoided it in preference to the (equally

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THE LAMENT OF THE SINGLE PRACTITIONER
Mordecai Rosenfeld

***From* The Lament of the Single Practitioner:**
Although Roe v. Wade *became history, it became history somewhat the way the World Champion Dodgers of 1955 became history; both are there in the record books, but it is not clear if either affects play now, this year.*

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stylized and limited) *bel canto* and *verismo* traditions.

The other reason for Handel's relative eclipse is that whereas he began as a composer for an essentially aristocratic audience, with the decline of that audience he became the composer for an expanding and triumphant English middle class. In the nineteenth century Handel was treated as a thoroughly Victorian composer and was celebrated in ways that distracted from the genius of his music. His work was known in grotesquely large choral extravaganzas—descriptions of 2000-voice Handel choirs and 500-instrument woodwind and brass ensembles are not uncommon—or as a ceremonial composer for royal occasions. Not even his spectacular anthems (like *Zadok the Priest*) and bravura arias (who can forget Kiri Te Kanawa, in an absurd flowerbonnet, singing "Let the Bright Seraphim" at Charles and Di's wedding) have been immune from unintentional comedy.

Thus Handel has had the worst of it, despite the immense strengths of his music. Neither has he been considered an abstract, pure musician of the Bach-Palestrina type, nor, as with Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, a model of the mature classicism that points the way toward romanticism. Handel seems completely enclosed by his period, except for the middle-class and royal associations that do not endear him to today's engaged music-lovers, who seem to regard him as an adolescent or low-brow taste. Handel does require a major effort at understanding, although ironically he is one of the most easily and directly likable of all composers. Handel has, however, been fortunate in that most of his modern scholarly interpreters have written informative and eminently readable books. There are few musicological studies to rival the intelligence and lucidity of Winton Dean's great books on Handel, and even in less specialized work—that of Paul Henry Lang and H. Robbins Landon—Handel emerges as a remarkably humane genius. He was worldly, yes, and always professional, and as has often been suggested, he seems to have taken from the English enough of their irony and common sense to undercut pretentiousness and give his profile a competence that is dismayingly unneurotic.

But Handel's greatness as a composer is in the end fascinatingly evident in his music. In everything he wrote there is a unique relationship between, on the one hand, counterpoint that could be as brilliantly organized as Bach's (with a slightly less opulent harmonic diversity) and on the other, a melodic, textural quality that often overtakes the counterpoint and commands the form. Some of his chaconnes and variational structures fuse the two modes, but on the whole Handel seems always to go from, say, fugues to arias to ensembles: This is true in his keyboard suites, the Opus 6 concerti grossi and many of his finest choral works. It is as if the strictness of polyphony were being coaxed by his power of dramatic and emotional expression into song, moving from the imitation of music by itself (counterpoint) to the imitation by music of a mood. In Handel one senses an enactment of musical invention that goes—to reverse Michael Fried's formulation for eighteenth-century painting—from the absorption of music with itself to the theatricality of music that seeks to show audiences what it can do mimetically by way of drama, dance, melody and formal organization.

Handel, more so than Bach, Mozart or Beethoven, was a composer whose method included a great deal of borrowing, substituting and reworking. Those who adhere to the cult of Mozart and Bach as endlessly and even effortlessly fertile composers have looked askance at Handel, who trails behind him a milewide stream of plagiarisms and casual thefts. Handel is even more unlike Beethoven, whose introspective struggles, tortured sketchbooks and tragic self-awareness seem written all over his music. Handel's is an art not so much of concealment as, paradoxically, of containment and adequacy. He could, as scholars have noted, say anything,

THE BULLET HOLE IN THE TWELFTH-STREET DOOR

It sprawls from the perfect circle
at its center like a star spreading
in the thick glass of the door.
Sight along it and it frames the shabby street
with its surprised mouth, a constant O
of quiet rage, outrage, the arbitrary
punctuation hurled from the alley or
the heavy-throated passing car
on a lightless morning.

But now sunlight issues through
this webbed fissure, the lean street
is raked with the groan of buses,
the students pass up and down the tiled halls
bathed in weary light.
A star, then, yes. A hole in
the fabric, the firmament, the random
message from another world,
light years beyond, the other side.

Listen and the world hisses
at the crystal bruise.
What's to become of us?
Who are these aliens at the gates?
The curriculum ticks away
like an immense clock
and does not answer, for it is possible
that the world is mind, and therefore
all worlds might balance
precariously on a single thought.
It is time for classes to begin.

Perhaps we are close now
to a great and final revelation
as the posters on the kiosk tell us
in smug Roman letters, but just now
see how the city pushes its common light
upon the glass, the dazzling spider
projected yellow on the far wall
above the gathered heads.

Frank X. Gaspar

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represent any mood, any situation, without a single seam showing. And yet he haunts one by the protean restlessness of his work. He seems never to be *there*, and yet his unmistakable sound and range regularly stand out. In no composer is originality harder to pin down and yet easier somehow to experience intelligently. The instinctual drives present in all music are educated and tamed by Handel almost completely, although in rare moments (in the Dionysian excesses of the late oratorios, for example) they do burst forth.

The real obstacle to appreciating Handel remains, however, his absence from the operatic stage today. There are few recordings of the operas to help remedy that gap: the only available version of *Giulio Cesare*, which the Metropolitan Opera has just staged for its 1988-89 season, is an unsatisfactory performance by Beverly Sills and Norman Treigle taken from the old New York City Opera production twenty years ago. I own a strangely disordered, but in its own way preferable, set of recorded extracts performed in 1964 by Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne with Richard Bonynge conducting, but that recording is no longer in print. By and large, then, Handel's operas are kept from contributing to his reputation. This is like excluding Beethoven's quartets or Mozart's piano concerti from the repertoire.

The usual reasons given for this omission are that Handel's conventions are cripplingly antimodern, antidemocratic and antirealistic, or that there aren't singers around who can handle either the virtuosity or the improvised ornamentation required for the performance of his work. There is enough truth in both these charges to make them stick—for about a minute. Mozart is equally difficult but he gets performed; similarly, the demands on the voice exacted by Verdi, Donizetti or Strauss are as great as what is required by Handel, and yet those composers are often performed. But today's opera culture—ruled as it is in New York by people who consider the Metropolitan's mission to be fulfilled by repeated productions of Puccini and Verdi—has disallowed Handel not because he is stylized, but because his stylizations cannot be explained or performed away, so to speak. Most of the literature on opera—Paul Robinson's excellent *Opera and Ideas*, for instance—doesn't touch Handel, and when such books do (as in *A Song of Love and Death* by the egregious Peter Conrad) he is reduced to clichés that render him a boring imitation of Molière. Handel's modernity may be found in the rigor with which he, like Schönberg or Webern, sticks to a prescribed mode, as well as the intelligence with which he always saves himself from mere routine or self-parody.

The original conditions for the performance of a Handel opera cannot be replicated today: Aristocratic coteries, castrati, card-playing audiences, Italianate literature and the like are in short supply, and the musicians trained in or capable of his rarefied manner of performance soon discover that the money is elsewhere. Yet the operas can be performed, and when they are, they are usually successful. But the essential point about Handel's operas is that intelligence and style are central to them; no amount of bellowing and emoting can help singers who can get through *Don Giovanni* but who can get absolutely nowhere with *Rodelinda* or *Cesare*. Short of hearing or seeing good performances of the operas, the best way for audiences and performers to get closer to Handel's world is to read the first two chapters of Winton Dean's *Handel and the Opera Seria*, and to play through a piano-vocal score, imagining Handel's full might.

Mercifully, someone at the Met has done that, with the result that the current *Giulio Cesare* is actually first-rate. The night I went, Kathleen Battle, slated most nights to sing the role of Cleopatra, was ill and replaced by Barbara Kilduff, a singer who in physique, agility of voice and technical security closely resembles Battle. Handel's Caesar and Cleopatra (mezzo and soprano) are not Shavian but Shakespearean, and Cleopatra in particular is wonderfully seductive and operatic—a mature woman capable of intrigue and murder, not a precocious teen-ager who sounds like a flute abandoning itself to unbelievable trills and runs. Kilduff wasn't ideal, but she got through creditably.

The plot of *Giulio Cesare* unfolds in Egypt in the aftermath of Pompey's defeat and subsequent murder by Tolomeo (castrato or countertenor), Cleopatra's brother, who also has designs on Caesar's life. So while Cleopatra plots to seduce Caesar, Caesar is also trying to escape Tolomeo's attempts on his life; the subplot concerns the efforts by Achilla, Tolomeo's general, to possess Cornelia, Pompey's widow, and destroy her vengeful son, Sesto.

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It all works out well of course—Achilla is killed, Tolomeo foiled, Caesar and Cleopatra united, Sesto and Cornelia rescued. As the only conventionally male voice in the ensemble, Julien Robbins's Achilla was good enough, and once in a while affecting, but it was Tatiana Troyanos's Caesar that dominated the proceedings with admirable, although not always successful consistency. Of her singing, it could be said that it was sublime, although in Caesar's first act aria "Va tacito e nascosto"—a piece that sets out Caesar's determined plan of revenge—her meticulous phrasing and ensemble delicacy (the aria is unique for its horn obbligato) went too far in communicating majestic transcendence and not far enough in cold-blooded vengeance. This is the difficulty with Handel: So finely calibrated are the effects of his words to his music that if the tempo is even a hair too fast the music sounds foolishly jolly; too slow and it sounds lugubrious.

The well-known British harpsichordist and conductor Trevor Pinnock led *Giulio Cesare* in his Metropolitan conducting debut. The sound he drew out of the confident orchestra was what we have come to recognize as Baroque authentic, with plentiful harpsichord continuo and somewhat thinned-out strings. There wasn't much flair to his conception, though it was idiomatic, sensible, well crafted. As with some of the principals in the cast—Martine Dupuy as Sesto and Sarah Walker as Cornelia—one felt that a serious idea of the music hadn't quite developed before the performance; only Jeffrey Gall, an impressive American countertenor, as Tolomeo treated Handel's music with the bold mixture of pleasure and art it requires, but his voice took almost a whole act to warm up.

John Copley's production was adequate, and except for tacky Egyptian costumes obviously borrowed from *Aida*, neither offended nor stirred me. Handel's operas work by extremely well-defined parts—recitatives, *da capo* arias, occasional ensembles that build into immediately discernible dramatic units, each of them cut off (and this is hard for modern audiences) by relentless exits. When the opera finally resolves itself into a conclusion with all the "good" characters onstage, Handel's method of deferred satisfaction is vindicated in a majestic concluding chorus, which in the Metropolitan production was a really great moment. For reasons I cannot fathom, almost a third of the audience left before the end, perhaps because they couldn't follow what was happening; in the Met's idiotic refusal to use supertitles, audiences are supposed either to sit passively or to have memorized the libretto. Nevertheless, should *Giulio Cesare* return to Lincoln Center, I would urge you to see and stay to the final curtain of this splendid example of an unusually great opera. ☐

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 478*)

several passages from our piece, including a lengthy discussion of the corporatization of the Constitution's bicentennial. Without the proverbial smoking gun, it seems, American corporations' support for fraudulent constitutional doctrines is not big news.

Jamie Kitman
Ruth Yodaiken

DUE PROCESS

Denver, Colo.

Your September 26 edition attributed to me a most damaging and inaccurate statement, one that does not reflect either my actual views or my complete remarks on the occasion cited [see David Corn and Jefferson Morley, "Beltway Bandits"].

While I differ profoundly with Desmond Tutu on questions of ethics, judgment and policy (including some of his statements justifying acts of violence), I certainly do not believe that he or any other civilian should be subjected to physical harm, except by due process of the law. I trust that you will promptly correct the dangerously distorted misconception that you have conveyed.

Donald S. McAlvany
President
International Collectors Associates

CORN AND MORLEY REPLY

Washington

After receiving McAlvany's carefully worded letter, we called our source in South Africa and listened to a tape of the breakfast chat he delivered in Durban. Referring to Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a very agitated fashion, he clearly said: "Somebody might want to even shoot him." But McAlvany is correct; we did not report his complete remarks. As soon as he uttered that wish, a more prudent thought process kicked in. "I . . . I . . . " he stammered, "I repeal that. I don't say shoot him." But he added: "Somebody ought to do something to make him stop what he's doing." He then chided Tutu for not speaking to a group of visiting Americans associated with McAlvany, accusing the Archbishop of cowardice: "He's afraid somebody might throw a rock at him."

David Corn and Jefferson Morley

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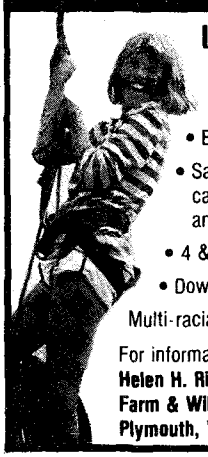

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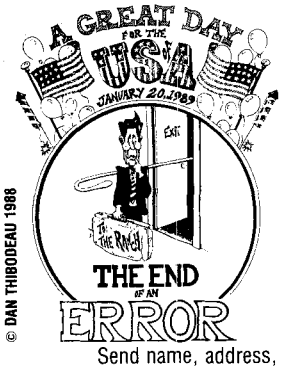

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N		L		E		K		I		R		N		T
G	R	I	T		A	L	O	N	G	S	H	O	R	E
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I				M						E				N
N	O	U	R	I	S	H		C	R	A	B	B	E	D
T		N		N		I		H		T		I		B
H	E	A	R	I	N	G	A	I	D		O	G	R	E
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P	E	A	S	A	N	T		O	U	T	P	O	S	T
I		R		N		E		O		T		R		E
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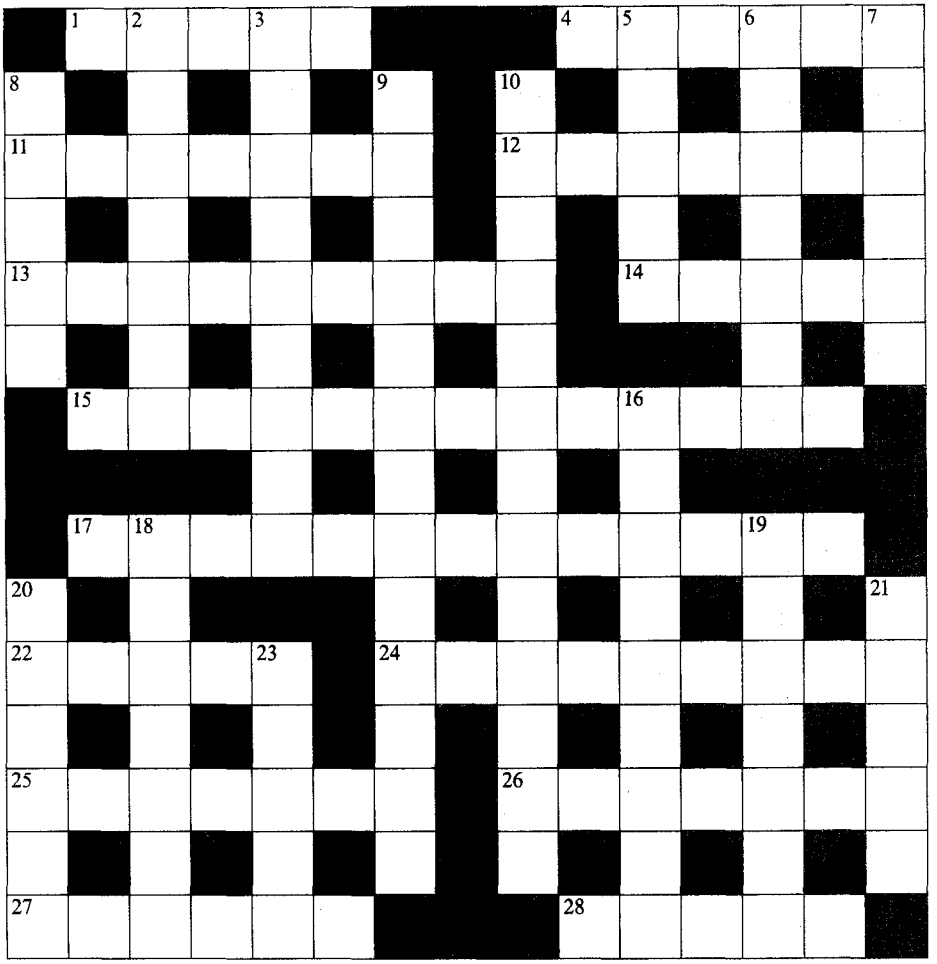

ACROSS

1 and 4 Does it imply Presidential advisers leave without notice? (Especially general advisers!) (5,2,4)
11 With a fight in the kitchen one might, particulary one with a drinking problem. (7)
12 Possibly bad sign, usually right in the middle. (7)
13 It fits such as Elks and Eagles to a T—you might find it a nice place to stay. (9)
14 Put down soft trimming here. (5)
15 Skill with what might be on the beach—boats, for example. (Hobbyists find lots of pleasure here.) (4,3,6)
17 One who studies such as photographs, one hears? (Nice music, too.) (7,6)
22 A large command on the sea? (5)
24 Possibly set with danger of a sort, and possibly at odds. (9)
25 Carved images around the North—some of which might be hard to understand. (7)
26 So caught out? (AWOL, perhaps.) And certainly not in line with things! (3-4)
27 Smoke associated with the brave—outstandingly important! (6)
28 Bluff might prove very expensive! (5)

DOWN

2 and 18 Rides in, possibly, swapping things which may now be illegal! (7,7)
3 Said to be sent very fast. (9)
5 Finish many a sign to have this ahead of it. (3,2)
6 Said to destroy everything in its path, where the lowest job is private to the worker. (4,3)
7 A note might be contained in bars this way. (6)
8 and 20 Are they said to run down (very much so)? (Yet that's what the ailing type used to take.) (5,6)
9 Talk about nothing sensible! (5,8)
10 It has a role here in France with an Irishman—a positive type, perhaps—getting involved. (13)
16 The beast isn't underfed, obviously—which may be why we are told to stay away from it. (6,3)
18 See 2
19 Brother or sister? A cogent possibility! (7)
20 See 8
21 One who crawls along putting 2 and 2 together? (5)
23 Put a little hat on father—and get him a cigar from here. (5)

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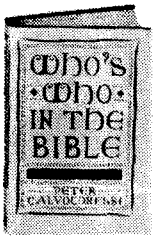

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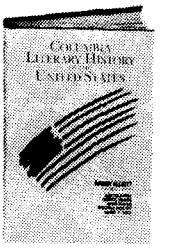

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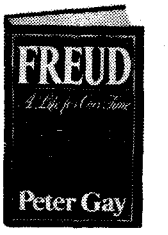

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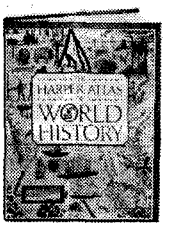

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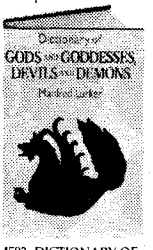

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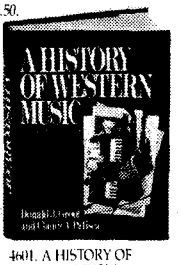

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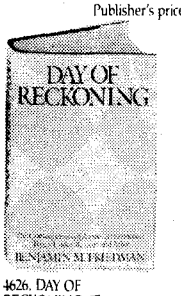

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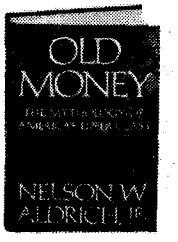

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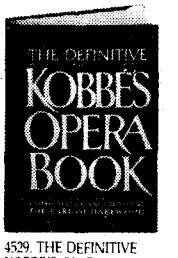

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